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CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH
AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

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THE CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES. Edited with explanatory and biographical notes by William Allan Neilson, Ph.D., President of Smith College, and K. G. T. Webster, Assistant Professor of English, Harvard University.

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CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

Selected Poems

EDITED WITH EXPLANATORY
AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BY

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The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

PREFACE

THE aim in the present volume, as in the other issues of the series, has been, not to compile a mediæval anthology of choice poems and passages, but to represent fully and where possible by complete works, all the chief poets of the period covered. The selections have been made and the apparatus furnished with a view to arousing the interest and satisfying the curiosity of the general reader and the student of literature rather than of language. Care has indeed been taken to provide trustworthy texts, and the book should not be without value to those seeking to extend their knowledge of Middle English and Middle Scots; but the glosses supplied in the footnotes are full enough to make possible the enjoyment of the poems by readers without special acquaintance with the earlier stages of the language. In the case of some of the more difficult of the alliterative poems, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Pearl*, and *Piers Plowman*, the amount of glossary required was so great that it seemed that our purpose would be better served by a literal translation than by footnotes so numerous as to make continuous reading all but impossible. Precisely how faithful these renderings are, the reader can judge for himself by comparing the translations with the specimens of the originals printed at the beginning of the two first-named poems.

No apology need be made for including a generous selection from the traditional ballads. Their authors, if they had authors in the strict sense, are indeed not among the "Chief Poets," nor are they all by any means to be assigned to the two centuries with which we are here concerned; but in a series which, it is hoped, will cover the whole field of English poetry, it would be preposterous to neglect a type which is one of its glories; and, in point of chronology, the ballads fit this volume as well as any. They belong to the folk, and the taste of the folk has little relation to the conventional periods into which literary history is divided.

A notable feature of the collection is the prominence given to the Scottish poets of the period. Partly on account of the political separation of England and Scotland, partly through an exaggerated sense of the difficulty of the dialect, students of English literature have unduly neglected these writers. Yet after a few peculiarities in spelling have been noted, Barbour, for example, is as easy as Chaucer; and in the matter of poetic quality none of Chaucer's English disciples is the equal of Henryson or Dunbar. The latter, it is true, is often mentioned if seldom read; but it is doubtful whether there is in the whole of English literature a case of neglected genius so remarkable as that of Henryson. This book will justify itself if it does no more than make accessible and call attention to poetry of so much interest and distinction.

In the choice of poets and poems to be included we have been greatly aided by many of our colleagues in the universities of the United States, — so many that only a general acknowledgment can be made of the obligations under which their generosity has placed us. For the final decisions, as well as for whatever faults in judgment and scholarship the book may contain, the editors are jointly responsible. Mr. Webster translated the *Gawain and the Pearl*, Mr. Neilson *Piers Plowman*, but each has had the opportunity to revise and criticize, so that the credit or discredit must be shared in common.

W. A. N.
K. G. T. W.

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CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH
AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

ROBERT MANNING OF BRUNNE

WITCHCRAFT AND DREAMS

(*Handling Sin*, ff. 339-556)

Gyf thou ever thurgh folye
 Dydest ought¹ do nygromauncy,
 Or to the devyl dedyst sacryfyse
 Thurgh wycheraftys asyse,²
 Or any man gaf the mede³
 For to reyse the devyl⁴ yn dede,
 For to telle, or for to wrey⁵
 Thyng that the was don awey;
 Gyf thou have do any of thys,
 Thou hast synned and do a-mys,
 And thou art wurthy to be shent⁶
 Thurgh thys yche⁷ commaundement.
 Gyf thou yn swerd, other yn bacyn,
 Any chylde madyst loke theryn,
 Or yn thumbe,⁸ or yn cristal, —
 Wychecraft men clepyn⁹ hyt al.
 Beleve nought yn the pyys¹⁰ cheteryng;
 Hyt ys no trouthe, but fals belevyng.
 Many belevyn yn the pye:
 Whan she comyth lowe or hye
 Cheteryng, and hath no reste,
 Than sey they we shul have geste.¹¹
 Manyon¹² trowyn¹³ on here wyls,
 And many tymes the pye hem gyls.¹⁴
 Also ys metyng on the morwe
 When thou shalt go to bye or to borwe;
 Gyf than thy erende spede ne sette,
 Than wylt thou curse hym that thou mette.
 Hyt ys the tyement of the devyl
 To curse hem that thoght the no evyl.
 Of hancel¹⁵ y can no skylle¹⁶ also;
 Hyt ys nought to beleve tharto:
 Me thynketh hyt ys fals ewer dey,
 Y beleve hyt nought, ne never shal weyl.¹⁷
 For many havyn glad hancel at the morw,
 And to hem or evyn comth mochl sorw;
 And manyon havyn yn the day grete noy,¹⁸
 And yyt or evyn cometh to hem mochl ioie.

So mayst thou wyte, gyf thou gode can,¹⁹
 That hancel ys no beleve to man.

Belevē nought moche yn no dremys,
 For many be nat but gleteryng glemys.
 These clerkys seyn that hyt ys vanyte,
 That nought ys, ne never shal be;
 And ofte mayst thou fynde hyt ryght
 That thou hast mete²⁰ upon the nyght.
 But therof to have mochl affyaunce
 The may betyde the sunner a chaunce.

On syxē maners may a man mete:
 Sum beyn to beleve, sum beyn to lete.²¹
 Sum men dremyn for surfeture,
 That etyn or drynkyn over mesure;
 And sum dremē on veyn thyng
 For over mychyl and grete fastyng;
 And sum beyn the fendes temptacyoun
 That to the trowthe ys fals tresoun;
 And sum come of over mochl thought
 Of thyng that men wuld havē wrought;
 And sum beyn Goddys pryvyte
 That he shewyth to warnē the;
 And, sum come thurgh grete stody,
 And shewē to the apertly.²²
 These syxē maners a clerk us tellyth,
 Seynt Gregory, that mochl spellyth.²³

The fyrst twey²⁴ maners, we wote weyl,
 Beyn oure defaultē every dey.
 The ton²⁵ ys for over mychel outrage,
 The touthur ys febylnesse of corage,²⁶
 As yn mete, or drynk, over moche takyng,
 Or yn feblyng the body with moche fastyng.
 The touthur fourē thys clerkys wytyn,
 For yn the bylle they ben wrytyn.
 Gyf they ne come thurgh temptacyoun
 Of the fende, that ys a felun,
 Nevere had seyde Salamon
 'That dremys men deseyve²⁷ manyon.'
 For tho that to dremys over moche trastys,²⁸
 To scornē hem the fende then frastys.²⁹
 Gyf they come nat also thurgh thoght,
 The wysē clerk hadde tolde hyt nought,
 Ne suffryd hyt be wrytyn yn boke
 That men alle day rede yn, and loke,

¹ atall. ² mode. ³ hire. ⁴ Call him up — the origin of our colloquial phrase. ⁵ hide. ⁶ punished.
⁷ very. ⁸ One divined by the white flecks on the thumb-nail. ⁹ call. ¹⁰ magpie's. ¹¹ doings — or possibly, a guest. ¹² Many a one. ¹³ believe.
¹⁴ deceives. ¹⁵ prognostication. ¹⁶ I know no good of it. ¹⁷ well. ¹⁸ annoyance.

¹⁹ understand. ²⁰ dreamt. ²¹ neglect. ²² openly.
²³ relates. ²⁴ two. ²⁵ The one. ²⁶ spirit. ²⁷ deceive.
²⁸ trust. ²⁹ tries.

Thus the wyse clerk seyth, Catun,
And techyth chyldryn thys lessun,
'Geve no charge to (thy) dremys,
They been but as (glasynge) glemys
That yn the thought (stertys &) lepyz
A-nyght whan thou (restys &) slepys:
That thou wakyng (sumtyme) thenkes,
Beforeth thy ygen hyt blenkys.¹

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Gyf they ne come thurgh pryvyte
That God wyl shewē me or the,
Iosep of dremys had gyve no kepe²
What hym was shewed yn hys slepe,
That fadyr and modyr and al hys kynde,
Thurgh hym shuld they wurshyp fynde.
Yn the byble men redē thys
In the fyrst boke of Genesys.

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Also hyt was shewyd pryvyly
To Iosep that wedded oure lady,
That with the chylde they shuldē fle
To Egypt, that yche cuntre.
Thys ys clepyd revelacyun,
To shewe byfore what ys to down.

Gyf they com noght thurgh stodyyng,
That tokene ys of selkouthe³ thyng,
Danyel had noght wist byfore
The dreme of Nabugodonosore.
Danyel seyde un-to the kyng,
"Thou thoughtyst to nyght a selkouthe

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thyng;

What manere folk shuld they be
That yn this worlde come aftyr the,
And how they shulde the worlde governe;
Yn thy thought thou gunne hyt gerne;⁴
And God shewyd hyt yn thy sygt;
That dremed the the touthen nyght."
He tolde the profyte than every deyl;
And the profete redde⁵ hyt weyl:
Wysly he seyde, and weyl thurgh soght,
Whan he hede⁶ toke to that the kyng thought.
And God shewyd what shuld betyde;⁷
What manere folk shulde aftyr a-byde.

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Sethyn ther beyn dremys so many man-
ere,⁸

Than ys doute and gretē were⁹
To wytē where-of dremys come,
That every nyght dremyn thurgh custome;
Ther beyn so many dremys yn veine,
That no man wotē no certeyn
But they that beyn with God pryve,
To whom ys graunted, swych thyng to see:
Swych men deseiyveth nat the devyl,¹⁰
They have no grace to knowe hys evyl;

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Ellys may no man fynde hem stable,
So ben dremys deseiyvable.
Gyf thou telle hem, than mayst thou erre;
And gyf thou throw hem, that ys wel werre;¹¹
For thou mayst dreme of sume evyl thyng
That may turn to better for thy preyng-
"Thou, leudman,¹² gyf godē tent,¹³
Trow noght agen the comaundment."¹⁴

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Gyf thou beleve yn wycheecraft
To chaungē thyng be the devyls craft, —
Swych beyn the devyl betaght,¹⁵
With holy chyrche they ben unsaght,¹⁶
And allē tho that on hem trowe
Mow drede hem self to brenne yn lowe;¹⁷
And thogh they fynde hyt sothe other
whyle,¹⁸

Hyt ys thurgh the fendēs gyle.
The fend fondyth¹⁹ with alle hys myght
To put sumwat yn herē syght²⁰
That shal make hem swych thyng beleve
And God almyghty mysplay²¹ and greve.
For ther was never womman ne man
That any wycheecraft be-gan,
That ever myght bryng hyt to an ende,
But fals beleve that wyl hem shende.
The wurdys certys beyn ryght noght,
But fals beleve maketh dede y-wroght.
For whan thou trowyst yn a fals thyng
The devyl hyt shewyth for that trowyng.
Lo here a tale of a wyche, ¹⁶¹
That leved²² no better tha(n) a byche.

THE TALE OF THE WITCH AND HER COW-SUCKING BAG

THERE was a wyche, and made a bagge,
A bely²³ of lethyr, a gretē swagge,²⁴
She sygaldryd²⁵ so thys bagge bely
That hyt gede²⁶ and soke²⁷ mennys ky,²⁸
At evene, and at morw tyde,
Yn here pasture, other ellys be syde.
Long hyt gede aboutē fast,
Tyl hyt was parceyved at the last;
Than all the godemen of the toune,
Byfore the bysshop dyden here somoun; ¹⁰
They dyden the baggē with here bere,
To wetē²⁹ what she shuld answer.
Hyt was shewyd byfore the bysshop,
That she dyde³⁰ to goo swych a melk
slop,³¹

⁹ worse. ¹⁰ layman. ¹¹ heed. ¹² handed over to.
¹³ unreconciled. ¹⁴ burn in flame. ¹⁵ sometimes.
¹⁶ strives. ¹⁷ displease. ¹⁸ believed. ¹⁹ bellows.
²⁰ bulky object. ²¹ enchanted. ²² went. ²³ sucked.
²⁴ kine. ²⁵ know. ²⁶ caused. ²⁷ bag.

¹ flashes before thine eyes. ² heed. ³ strange.
⁴ began to yearn for it. ⁵ expounded. ⁶ heed.
⁷ kinds. ⁸ uncertainty.

Thurgh wycchecraft and mysaventure,
To sugke here keyn yn here pasture.
The bysshop mervyled, and other mo,¹
How that she myght do hyt go.
"Dame," seyde the bysshop, "do thy quen-
tyse,"²

And late us se how hyt shal ryse." 20

Thys wycche here charme began to sey,
The slop ros up, and gede the weye.
The bysshop seyde, "thys have we seyn;
Do hyt now to lygge ^sageyn,"

The wycchē dede al at hys wylle:

She made the slop agen lygge styлле.

The bysshop made a clerk than wryte

Al that she seyde, mochel and lyte,

And allē how she made here went;⁴

The bysshop tharto gaf gode entent. 30

"Than," seyde the bysshop, "now shal y,

As thou hast do, do thy maystry."⁵

The bysshop began the charme to rede,

And as she dyde, he dyde yn dedo;

He seyde and dedē every deyl,

Ryght as she dede, he dede as weyl.

The sloppe lay styлле, as hyt ded wore,

For hym ne ros hyt never the more.

"Why," seyde he, "wyl hyt nat ryse,

And y have do the samē wyse, 40

And seyde the wurdys, lesse ne mo,

And for my seyng wyl hyt nat go?"

"Nay," she seyde, "why shuld hyt so?

Ye beleve nat as y do:

Wulde ye beleve my wurdys as y,

Hyt shulde a go, and sokun ky."

He seyde, "than faleth⁶ noht but belevyng";

She seyde, "that helpeth al my thyng;

And so hyt ys for ourē lawe, 50

Beleve ys morē than the sawe;⁷

For thou mayst sey what thou wylt,

But thou beleve hyt, ellys ys alle spylt;

Alle that y seyde, ye beleve hyt weyl,

My beleve hath do the dede every deyl."

The bysshop comaundyde that she shuld noht

Beleve ne wurche as she had wrought.

THE TALE OF THE SACRILE- GIOUS CAROLLERS

(*Handling Sin*, ll. 8987-9252)

KAROLLES,⁸ wrastlynges, or somour
games,

Who-so ever haunteth any swyche shames

Yn cherche, other yn cherchēyerd,

¹ others besides. ² cunning. ³ lie down. ⁴ trick.

⁵ feat. ⁶ needeth. ⁷ saying. ⁸ Circular dances,

and the accompanying song.

Of sacrylage he may be a-ferd;
Or entyrludēs, or syngynge,
Or tabure bete,⁹ or other pypynge,
Alle swychē thyng forbodyn es
Whyle the prest stondeh at messe.

Alle swyche, to every gode preste ys lothe,

And sunner wyl he make hym wroth 10

Than he wyl that hath no wylt,

Ne undyrstondeth nat holy wryt;

And speecyaly, at hyghe tymes,

Karolles to syngne, and redē rymys,

Noght yn nonē holy stedes,¹⁰

That myght dysturble the prestēs bedes,

Or gyf he were yn orysun

Or any outhere devocyun,

Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde,¹¹

Thys and many other folde. 20

But for to leve yn cherche to daunce,

Y shal ghow telle a ful grete chaunce,

And y trow, the most that fel

Ys as soth as the gospel;

And fyl thys chauncē yn thys londe,

Yn Ingland, as y undyrstonde;

Yn a kynges tyme that hyght Edward,

Fyl thys chaunce that was so hard.

Hyt was upp-on a crystemesse nyght

That twelve folys¹² a karolle dyght;¹³ 30

Yn wodehed,¹⁴ as hyt were yn cuntok¹⁵

They come to a tounne men calles Colbek;

The cherche of the tounne that they to

come,

Ys of Seynt Magne¹⁶ that suffred martyr-

dome;

Of Sent Bukcestre hyt ys also,

Seynt Magnes suster, that they come to.

Here names of alle, thus fonde y wryte,

And as y wote, now shul ye wyte:

Here lodēs-man¹⁷ that made hem glew,¹⁸

Thus ys wryte, he hyghte Gerlew; 40

Twey maydens were yn here coveyne,¹⁹

Mayden Merswynde, and Wybessyne;

Alle these come thedyr for that enchesone²⁰

Of the prestēs doghtyr of the tounne.

The prest hyght Robert, as y kan ame;²¹

Agone hyght hys sone by name;

Hys doghter, that these men wulde have,

Thus ys wryte, that she hyght Ave;

Echoun consented to o wyl,

Who shuld go Ave oute to tyl;²² 50

They graunted echone out to sende

Bothe Wybessynē and Merswynde.

These wommen gede and tolled²³ here oute

⁹ beating. ¹⁰ places. ¹¹ accounted. ¹² fools.

¹³ made. ¹⁴ madness. ¹⁵ contumely. ¹⁶ Magnus.

¹⁷ leader. ¹⁸ music. ¹⁹ company. ²⁰ on account.

²¹ guess. ²² entice. ²³ enticed.

Wyth hem to karolle the cherche aboute.
Beune ordeyned here karollyng;
Gerlew endyted what they shuld syng:
Thys ys the karolle that they sunge,
As telleth the latyn tunge,

"Equitabat Bevo per silvam frondosam,
Ducebat secum Merswyndam formosam. 60
Quid stamus, cur non imus?"

(. . . a gap in the MS.)

"By the leved wode rode Bevolynne,
Wyth hym he leddē feyre Merswyne.
Why stonde we? why go we noght?"
Thys ys the karolle that Grysly wrought.
Thys songe sunge they yn the cherche-
yerd, —

Of foly were they no thyng aferd, —
Un-to the matynes were alle done,
And the messe shuld bygynnē sone. 69

The preste hym revest¹ to begynne messe,
And they ne left therefore, never the lesse,
But daunsed furthe as they bygan;
For alle the messē they ne blan.²

The preste, that stode at the autere³
And herde here noysē and here bere,⁴
Fro the auter down he nam,⁵
And to the cherchē porche he cam,
And seyde, "On Goddes behalve, y yow
forbede

That ye no lenger do swych dede;
But cometh yn, on feyre manere, 80
Goddē servysē for to here,
And doth at Crystyn mennys lawe;
Karollethe no more for Crystys awe,
Wurschyppe hym with alle youre myght,
That of the Vyrgyne was bore thys nyght."

For alle hys byddyng, lefte they noght,
But daunsed furth, as they thought.
The prest therefore was sore a-greved;
He preyde God that he on belevyd,
And for Seynt Magne, that he wulde so
werche — 90

Yn whos wurschyp sette was the cherche —
That swych a veniaunce⁶ were on hem sent
Are they oute of that stede were went,
That they myght ever ryght so wende
Unto that tymē twelvemonth ende:
(Yn the latyne that y fonde thore,
He seyth nat 'twelvemonth,' but 'ever-
more.')

He cursed hem there alsäume⁷
As they karoled on here gaume.

As sone as the preste hadde so spoke, 100
Every hande yn oute so fast was loke,

That no man myght with no wundyr
That twelvemonth the parte hem asundyr.

The preste gede yn, whan thys was done,
And commaunded hys sone Agone
That he shulde go swythe⁸ after Ave,
Oute of that karolle algate⁹ to have.
But al to late that wurde was seyde,
For on hem alle was the veniaunce leyde.

Agone wende weyl for to spede; 110
Un-to the karolle asswythe¹⁰ he gede;
Hys systyr by the arme he hente,¹¹
And the arme fro the body wente.
Men wundred allē, that there wore,
And mervyle mowe ye herē more;
For sethen¹² he had the arme yn hande,
The body gede furth karoland;
And nother body ne the arme
Bledde never blodē, colde ne warme,
But was as drye, with al the haunche, 120
As of a stok were ryve a braunche.

Agone to hys fadyr went,
And broght hym a sory present:
"Loke, fadyr," he seyde, "and have hyt
here,

The armē of thy doghtyr dere
That was myn ownē systyr Ave,
That y wende y myght a save.¹³
Thy cursyng, now sene hyt ys
With veniaunce on thyn ownē flessch;
Fellyche¹⁴ thou cursedst, and over sone; 130
Thou askedest veniaunce, thou hast tny
bone." ¹⁵

Yow thar¹⁶ nat aske gyf there was wo
With the preste and with many mo.

The preste that cursed for that daunce,
On some of hys fyl hardē chaunce.
He toke hys doghtyr arme forlorn
And byrydē hyt on the morn;
The nextē day the arme of Ave
He fonde hyt lyggyng above the grave. 140
He byryed hyt on anouther day,
And eft¹⁷ above the grave hyt lay;
The thryddē tyme he byryed hyt,
And eft was hyt kast oute of the pyt.
The prest wulde byrye hyt no more;
He dredde the veniaunce ferly¹⁸ sore;
Yn-to the cherche he bare the arme;
For drede and doute of morē harme,
He ordeyned hyt for to be,
That every man myght with ye hyt se.

These men that gede so karolland 150
Alle that yerē hand yn hand,

¹ attired. ² ceased. ³ altar. ⁴ cries. ⁵ took
his way. ⁶ vengeance. ⁷ all together.

⁸ straightaway. ⁹ by all means. ¹⁰ forthwith.
¹¹ took. ¹² after. ¹³ have saved. ¹⁴ Savagely.
¹⁵ boon. ¹⁶ you need. ¹⁷ again. ¹⁸ wondrous.

They never oute of that stede gede,
 Ne nonë myght hem thennë¹ lede;
 There the cursyng fyrst bygan,
 Yn that place a-boute they ran,
 That never ne felte they no werynes —
 As many bodies, for goyng, dos —
 Ne metë etë, ne drank drynke,
 Ne sleptë onely a-lepy² wynke;
 Nyght, ne day, they wyst of none, 160
 Whan hyt was come, whan hyt was gone;
 Frost ne snogh, hayle ne reyne,
 Of colde ne hete, felte they no payne;
 Heere ne naylës never grewe,
 Ne solowed³ clothes, ne turned hewe;
 Thundyr ne lyghtnyng dyd hem no dere,⁴
 Goddes mercy dyd hyt fro hem were;⁵
 But sungge that songge that the wo wrought,
 “Why stondë we? why go we noght?”
 What man shuld thyr be yn thys lyve, 170
 That ne wulde hyt see, and thedyr dryve?⁶
 The Emperoure Henry come fro Rome
 For to see thys hard(ë) dome;
 Whan he hem say, he weptë sore
 For the myschefe that he sagh thore;
 He did come wryghtës for to make
 Coveryng over hem for tempest sake;
 But that they wrought, hyt was yn veyn,
 For hyt come to no certeyn;
 For that they settë on oo⁷ day, 180
 On the outhor downe hyt lay;
 Ones, twyys, thryys, thus they wrogt,
 And alle here makyng was for nogt;
 Myght no coveryng hyle⁸ hem fro colde
 Tyl tyme of mercy, that Cryst hyt wolde.

Tyme of grace fyl thurgh hys mygt
 At the twelvemonth end, on the yolë⁹ nyght,
 The same oure that the prest hem banned,¹⁰
 They samë oure, atwynne they woned;¹¹
 That houre that he cursed hem ynne, 190
 That samë oure they gede atwynne:
 And, as yn twynkelyng of an ye,
 Yn-to the cherchë gun they flye,
 And on the pavement they fyl alle downe,
 As they hade be dede, or fal yn a swone.

Thre days, styl, they lay echone,
 That none steryd, other flesshe or bone,
 And, at the thre days ende,
 To lyfe God grauntede hem to wende.
 They sette hem upp, and spak apert 200

To the parysshe prest, syre Robert:
 “Thou art ensample and enchesun¹²
 Of oure long confusyun;
 Thou maker art of oure travayle,
 That ys to many grete mervayle;
 And thy travayle shalt thou sone ende,
 For to thy long home, sone shalt thou
 wende.”

Alle they ryse that ychë tyde,
 But Avë; she lay dede besyde;
 Grete sorowe had here fadyr, here brother;
 Merveyle and drede had allë outhor, 211
 Y trow no drede of soulë dede,¹³
 But with pyne was broght the body dede.
 The fyrst man was the fadyr, the prest,
 That deyde aftyr the doghtyr nest.¹⁴
 Thys ychë¹⁵ arme that was of Ave,
 That nonë myght leye yn grave,
 The emperoure dyd a vessel werche
 To do hyt yn, and hange yn the cherche,
 That alle men myght se hyt and knawe, 220
 And thenk on the chaunce when men hyt
 sawe.

These men that hadde go thus karolland
 Alle the yere, fast hand yn hand,
 Thogh that they werë than asunder,
 Yyt alle the world spake of hem wunder:
 That same hoppyng that they fyrst gede,
 That daunce gede they thurgh land and
 lede;¹⁶

And as they ne myght fyrst be unbounde,
 So ofte to-gedyr myght they never be
 founde,

Ne myght they never come ageyn 230
 To-gedyr, to oo stede¹⁷ certeyn.

Foure gede to the courte of Rome,
 And ever hoppyng aboute they nome;¹⁸
 With sundyr lepyss come they thedyr,
 But they come never ofte to-gedyr;
 Here clothes ne roted, ne naylës grewe
 Ne heere ne wax, ne solowed hewe,
 Ne never hadde they amendement,
 That we herde, at any corseynt,¹⁹
 But at the vyrgyne Seynt Edyght,²⁰ 240
 There was he botened,²¹ seynt Teodryght;
 On oure lady day, yn lenten tyde,
 As he slepte here tounge besyde,
 There he hade hys medycyne,
 At seynt Edyght, the holy vyrgyne.

¹ thence. ² a single. ³ faded. ⁴ caused them
 no harm. ⁵ turn aside. ⁶ go. ⁷ one. ⁸ cover,
 protect. ⁹ Yule. ¹⁰ cursed. ¹¹ apart they went.

¹² occasion. ¹³ no fear of her soul's being dead.
¹⁴ next. ¹⁵ same. ¹⁶ nations. ¹⁷ one place.
¹⁸ went. ¹⁹ holy saint. ²⁰ Edith. ²¹ amended.

THE PEARL¹

I

PERLE plesaunte² to prynces paye,
To clanky clos in goide so clere!
Oute of oryent, I hardyly saye,
Ne proued I neuer her precios pere,
So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
So smal, so smope her syde³ were.
Quere-so-euer I jugged gemmez gaye,
I sette hyr sengeley in synglure.
Allas! I leste hyr in on erbere;
þur³ gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
I dewyne, for-dolked of luf-daungere,
Of þat pryuy perle wyth-uten spot.

2

Syþen in þat spot³ hit fro me sprange,
Ofte haf I wayted, wyschande þat wele
þat wont wat³ whyle deuoyde my wrange,
& heuen my happe & al my hele,
þat dot³ bot pryche my hert⁴ þrange,
My breste in bale bot bolne & bele.
ȝet þoȝt me neuer so swete a sange
As styлле stounde let to me stele;
For-soþe þer fleten to me fele.
To þenke hir color so clad in clot!
O moul, þou marrez a myry iuele,
My priuy perle wyth-uten spotte!

3

þat spot of spysez [mo]t⁵ nedeȝ sprede,
þer such rychez to rot is runne;
Blomeȝ blayke & blwe⁶ & rede
þer schyneȝ ful schyr agayn þe sunne;
Flor & fryte may not be fede
þer hit doun drof in moldeȝ dunne;
For vch gresse mot grow of grayneȝ dede,
No whete were elleȝ to woneȝ wonne;

¹ See the notes to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the excerpt from the original text, for the main peculiarities of the manuscript.

² The italic letters, like *n* here, are indicated in the MS. only by a sign of contraction.

³ Each stanza in the sets of five is connected to the preceding stanza by the repetition in the first line of some word from the last line of the preceding stanza.

⁴ Such a word could perfectly well have its original final *e* in order to improve the metre.

⁵ Brackets about letters, as here, indicate that the letters have been supplied or emended by an editor.

⁶ *w* for single *u*.

Of goud vche goude is ay by-gonne;
So semly a sede moȝt fayly not,
þat spry[n]gande spyceȝ vp ne sponne
Of þat precios perle wyth-uten spotte.

4

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun
I entred, in þat erber grene,
In augoste in a hyȝ seysoun,
Quen corne is coruen wyth crokeȝ kene.
On huyle þer perle hit trendeled doun
Schadowed pis worteȝ ful schyre & schene—
Gilofre, gyngure, & gromylyoun,
& pyonys powdered ay by-twene.
ȝif hit watȝ semly on to sene,
A fayr reflayr ȝet fro hit flot,
þer wonys þat worþyly, I wot & wene,
My precious perle wyth-uten spot.

5

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d
For care ful colde þat to me caȝt;
A de[r]uely dele in my hert denned,
þaȝ resoun sette myseluen saȝt.
I playned my perle þat þer watȝ spenned
Wyth fyrte skylleȝ þat faste faȝt;
þaȝ kynde of kryst me comfort kened,
My wreched wyll in wo ay wraȝte.
I felle upon þat floury flaȝt,
Suche odour to my herneȝ schot;
I slode vpon a slepyng-slaȝte,
On þat prec[i]os perle wythouten spot.

6

Fro spot my spyryt þer sprang in space,
My body on balke þer bod in sweuen;
My goste is gon in godeȝ grace,
In auenture þer meruayleȝ meuen.
I ne wyte in pis worlde quere þat hit
wace,
Bot I knew me keste þer klyfeȝ cleuen;
Towarde a foreste I bere þe face,
Where ryche rokkeȝ wer to dyscreuen.
þe lyȝt of hem myȝt no mon leuen,
þe glemande glory þat of hem glent;
For wern neuer webbeȝ þat wyȝeȝ weuen
Of half so dere adub[be]mente.

THE PEARL

I

1. Pearl, pleasant for princes to set cleanly in clear gold, hardly I say that out of the Orient I never found its¹ precious peer. So round, so beauteous in each array, so small, so smooth were its sides, that wheresoever I judged of gay jewels I set it singly by itself. Alas! I lost it in an arbor;² through grass to ground it went from me. I pine, stricken³ by love-danger, for mine own pearl without a spot.

2. Since in that spot it sprang from me, oft have I waited, wishing for that weal that was wont whilom to rid me of my woe and raise my hap and all my joy; it doth pierce⁴ through my heart and makes my breast in bale to swell and burn. Yet me thought never was there so sweet a song as stole to me in the silent hour; forsooth there floated to me many, to think of her beauty, so clad in clay. O earth, thou marrest a lovely jewel, mine own pearl without a spot!

3. That spot must needs abound in spices where such riches is run to rot. Blooms yellow and blue and red shine there full sheer against the sun; flower and fruit may not fade⁵ where it drove down in the dun mould; for every herb must grow from a seed's death; else were no wheat e'er brought to barns; from good each good is aye begun. So seemingly a seed could not fail that springing spices should not start up from that precious pearl without a spot.

4. To the spot which I tell of, in that green garden, I went in August, at the height of the season,⁶ when corn is cut with sickles keen. On the mound where the pearl had rolled down, these herbs so bright and fair cast their shade⁷ — gilly-flower,

¹ The pearl, as may be seen by a glance at the original on the opposite page, is indifferently neuter and feminine in the poem.

² Perhaps *garden*, i.e. Anglo-French *herber*, grassy place, herb garden.

³ Reading *fordolled* instead of *fordolcked*, which latter might mean pierced.

⁴ Or "pierce my heart frequently."

⁵ MS. *fede* is doubtful.

⁶ Or, "on a high festival," i.e. Assumption.

⁷ Ambiguous passage: possibly the flowers shaded the hill; or again, the hill the flowers.

ginger and gromwell, and ever peonies sprinkled between. If it was seemly to look upon, yet more pleasing was the sweet odour that floated from it. There dwells, I wot and ween, that worthy one, my precious pearl without a spot.

5. Before that spot I clasped my hands for the heavy sorrow which seized me. A doleful⁸ pang made a tumult in my heart, although reason reconciled me. I lamented my pearl that was enclosed there with frightened⁹ reasonings that fast fought. Though Christ's goodness offered me comfort, my wretched will sank ever into grief. Such a fragrance shot to my senses that I fell upon the flowery sward, and dropped into a sleeping trance above that precious pearl without a spot.

II

6. From the spot my spirit sprang into space; my body abode in a trance on the mound. My ghost by God's grace went on an adventure to a land where marvels move; I knew not where in this world it was; but I knew that I was borne where cliffs are cloven; my face I turned toward a forest where rich rocks were to be descried; the light of them might no man believe, the gleaming glory that glinted from them; for never were fabrics woven by men of half so fair adornment.

7. Adorned were all the sides of the downs with crystal cliffs so clear. Bright woods about them were, with boles as blue as indigo; like burnished silver the leaves unfold, trembling thick on every limb; when a gleam from the sky glides against them with a splendid shimmering they shine full bright. The gravel upon the ground¹⁰ was precious pearls of Orient, — the sunbeams but dark and dull in comparison with that ornament.

8. The adornment of those beauteous

⁸ Keeping the MS. reading, *develly*, as if from Old French *doel*, *duel*, *grief*.

⁹ Doubtful. The MS. *fyrte* may be — as it is translated — related to A.S. *fyrhtan*, to frighten; or may possibly stand for the numeral *forty*.

¹⁰ Literally: The gravel that on the ground gan grind.

downs made my spirit all grief forget; so fresh was the savour of the fruit that it fairly restored me like food. Fowls there flew in the forest, of flaming hues, both small and great. But the citole-string and the cithern player could not recount their splendid mirth; for when those birds beat their wings, they sang with sweet assent; so gracious glee could no man get as to hear and see their adornment.

9. So was adorned in dear array all that woodland where fortune leads me forth; the beauty thereof for to relate is no man worthy. I walked aye forth in happy wise; no bank so big as to cause me fear; the farther into the park, the fairer gan rise the plain, the plants, the spice, the trees,¹ and hedges and banks, and rich meads—their steep banks like gold embroidery fine. I won to a water that ran bright by the shore. Lord, fair was its adornment!

10. The adornment of the precious dell was radiant banks of beryl bright; sweetly sounding swept the water, with a murmuring voice rushing by. In the bottom there stood bright stones, that glowed and glimmered like rays through glass, or as the streaming² stars, when men sleep sound,³ stare in the welkin in winter night; for each pebble, set there in the pool, was emerald, or sapphire, or gentle gem; so that all the pool gleamed with the light, so rich was its adornment.

III

11. The adornment dear of down and dales, of wood and water and fair plains, raised bliss in me, abated my sorrows, ended my distress, destroyed my pains. Down along a stream that swiftly runs I turned in bliss. Crowded was my mind.⁴ The further I followed these watery vales the greater strength of joy strained my heart. As Fortune fares whereas she will, whether solace she send or sorrow, the wight to whom her will she grants⁵ strives to have aye more and more.

12. More of weal was in that plan⁶ than I could tell, though I had time; for earthly heart might not suffice to the tenth part of

that gladness glad. Therefore I thought that Paradise was there over against the broad banks. I supposed the stream to be a division by waters made between joys.⁷ Beyond the brook, by slope or dale, I imagined that city⁸ might be placed. But the water was deep, I durst not wade; and ever I longed aye more and more.

13. More and more, and yet still more I listed to see beyond the brook; for if it was fair where I walked, much lovelier was the farther land. About me gan I to stumble and stare; to find a ford fast gan I seek; but dangers more I wis there were the farther I stalked by the strand; and ever it seemed to me I should not to flinch for woe where joys so precious were. Then a new matter came to hand that moved my mind aye more and more.

14. A greater marvel gan my mind to daunt. I saw beyond that merry mere a crystal cliff right brilliant; many a royal ray shot from it. At the foot thereof there sat a child, a maiden of mien full debonaire; gleaming white was her garment—I knew her well, I had seen her before. As glistering gold when it is cut, so shone that fair one upon the shore.⁹ I looked upon her there at length; and the longer, I knew her more and more.

15. The more I searched her fair face, her beauteous figure scanned, such a gladdening glory glided to me as heretofore was little wont. Desire urged me to call her, but confusion gave my heart a blow; I saw her in so strange a place; such a shock might well amaze my heart. Then she lifted up her fair face, her visage white as plain ivory, that stung my strayed heart; and more and more the longer she gazed.

IV

16. More than I desired, my dread arose; I stood full still, and durst not call; with open eyes and mouth full close I stood as mute as hawk in hall. I deemed that spiritual was the purport, and I dreaded ever what should befall lest she whom I saw there escaped me ere I could arrest her with my voice. But

¹ Literally, "pear-trees."

² "Raining influence," as it were.

³ Uncertain; possibly "strong men."

⁴ Literally, "Brimful my brains."

⁵ Meaning not quite sure.

⁶ Literally, "wise."

⁷ i.e. the stream separated two joyous lands. Meaning a bit doubtful.

⁸ i.e. the Heavenly Jerusalem.

⁹ For the MS. *anunder shore* one is tempted to read *anunder gore* (garment), "under gore" being a favorite rime-tag with some of the romancers in such a connection.

that gracious and gay one without fault,¹ so smooth, so small, so seemly slight, rose up in her royal array — a precious piece in pearls bedight.

17. Set pearls of royal price there might man by grace have seen when she, fresh as fleur-de-llys, down the bank quickly took her way. All glistening white was her mantle,² open at sides and brightly bound with the purest margery pearls, methinks, that ever I saw yet with mine eyes. The long sleeves,³ I wot and I ween, were adorned and set with double pearls; her kirtle of the same bright stuff was studded round with precious pearls.

18. A studded crown yet wore that girl, of margeries and no other stone, high pinnaled of clear white pearl, with blooming flowers wrought upon it. Her head had no other fillet, her own locks⁴ covered her quite. Her semblant was stately as that of duke or earl; her hue more white than whalebone.⁵ As bright as cut gold shone her locks, that lay lightly unbound over her shoulders. Her deep collar did not lack embroidery of precious pearls.

19. Set and sewed was every hem, at hands, at sides, at the openings, with white pearls and no other gem; and burnished white was her vesture. But a wondrous pearl without a flaw was set securely amidst her breast. A man's reason would be greatly baffled ere his mind could comprehend its size; no tongue, I think, would suffice to give an adequate account of that sight, so clean and clear and pure it was — that precious pearl where it was set.

20. Clad in pearl, that precious piece beyond the water came down the shore. From here to Greece was there never gladder man than I when she stood on the bank. She was nearer to me than aunt or niece; my joy therefore was much the more. Speech she proffered me, that dear being.⁶ Inclining low, in womanly fashion, she doffed her crown of great treasure, and greeted me

¹ Perhaps to be taken literally, "without gall." Doves and such gentle things were supposed to be devoid of gall.

² The MS. *beautys* is doubtful.

³ Literally, "laps."

⁴ The MS. *iere leke* is very difficult. *Here heke* (for *eke*), = hair also; and *here-leke* = hair-locks, have been proposed. *Hair lace* might be suggested; or *leke* might conceivably represent the Old Norse suffix *-leker*; *here-leke* being then simply hair, growth of hair.

⁵ i.e. ivory.

⁶ Literally, "special spiec."

with blithe countenance. Glad was I that ever I was born, to answer that sweet one clad in pearls.

V

21. "Oh pearl," quoth I, "in pearls clad, art thou my pearl that I have mourned, regretted by me lonely in the night? Much longing for thee have I concealed since into the grass thou glided from me. Pensive, impaired, I suffer pain, whilst thou to a life of joy art come in the land of Paradise, untouched by strife. What fate has borne my jewel hither, and left me in this grief and great anxiety? Since we were torn atwain and parted I have been a joyless jeweller."

22. Then that jewel clad in gentle gems raised her face and her gray eyes, set on her crown of orient pearl, and soberly thereafter gan she speak: "Sir, ye have reckoned amiss, to say that your pearl is all lost that is enclosed in a coffer as comely as this garden gracious gay; herein to bide forever, and play, where loss nor mourning come never nigh. Here were a treasure-chest indeed for thee if thou were a gentle jeweller."

23. "But, gentle jeweller, if thou must lose thy joy for a gem that was dear to thee, thou seemst to me bent on a mad purpose, and busiest thee for a slight reason. For that which thou lost was but a rose, that flowered and failed as nature decreed. Now, through the virtue of the chest that encloses it, it has become a pearl of price. — And thou hast called thy fate a thief, that manifestly has made for thee something out of nothing. Thou blamest the very cure of thy mischief. Thou art no natural jeweller."

24. A jewel to me then was this guest, and jewels were her gentle saws. "Forsooth," quoth I, "my blissful best one, my great distress thou takest all away. To be excused I make request; for I believed my pearl vanished. Now I have it I shall make merry and dwell with it in bright groves, and praise my Lord and all his laws, who has brought me near to this bliss. Now were I with you beyond these waves I were a joyful jeweller."

25. "Jeweller," then said that clean gem, "why jest ye men, so mad ye be? Three words hast thou spoken at once; and unadvised, forsooth, were all three. Thou knowest not what in the world one doth mean.

Thy words before thy wit gan fly. Thou sayest that thou believest me to be in this dale because thou canst see me with thine eyes; secondly thou sayest that thou thyself shalt dwell with me right here; the third is, to pass this fair water — that may no joyful jeweller.

VI

26. "I hold that jeweller little to praise who believes¹ well what he sees with his eye; and much to blame and uncourteous him who believes our Lord would make a lie, who loyally promised to raise your life, though fortune caused your flesh to perish. Ye set his words all awry who believe nothing but ye see it; and that is a point of pride which evil beseems each good man, — to believe that no tale is quite true unless his own reason can judge of it.

27. "Judge now thyself whether thou knowest how to talk — as if a man should have words with God. Thou sayst thou shalt dwell in this precinct. Methinks it behoves thee first to ask leave, — and even then of permission thou mightst fail. Thou wishest over this water to cross; first thou must take other counsel; thy corse must colder sink² in the mould, for it was undone at the grove of Paradise; our first father abused it there. Through dreary death it behoves each man to pass ere over this stream the Lord suffer him."

28. "Doomest thou me," quoth I, "my sweet, to grief again, then I must perish. Now I have found what I lost, must I again forgo it ere ever I die? Why must I both miss and find it? My precious pearl causes me great pain. What serves treasure but to make man weep, when he must lose it again with sorrow? Now reek I never how I decline, nor how far from my land one banish me, when I have no part in my pearl. Except enduring grief what may men expect?"

29. "Thou expectest naught but deep distress," then said that wight; "why dost thou so? For din of grief over lesser losses oft many a man overlooks the greater. Thou oughtst the better to rule thyself, and love aye God, and weal and woe, for anger gains thee not a cress. Who needs must suffer, let him not be so wild; for though thou dance as any doe, leap, and

cry thy wild remonstrances, yet when thou canst no further, to or fro, thou must abide what he shall adjudge.

30. "Judge, Lord! Ever ordain for him!³ He will not turn a foot from the way. Thy amends amount not to a mite, though thou shouldst for sorrow be never blithe. Cease thy rebellion, and end complaint, and seek his compassion right swiftly and earnestly. Thy prayer may move his pity, that mercy shall show her power; his comfort may alleviate thy languor, and lightly drive off thy afflictions; for marred or made, mourning and rejoicing,⁴ all lies in him to ordain and judge."

VII

31. Then spake I to that damsel: "Let my Lord not be angry, if I rave rashly, spurning in speech. My heart was all stricken with loss, as welling water gushes out of the spring. I put myself ever in his mercy. Rebuke me not with fell words, though I go astray, my dear adored one; but help me kindly with your comfort, pitiously thinking upon this — ye joined together⁵ care and me, ye who once were the ground of all my bliss.

32. "My bliss and my bale both have ye been; but my sorrow was much the greater. Since thou wast removed from every danger, I wist never where my pearl was gone. Now that I see it, my anguish grows less. And when we separated we were at one; God forbid we now be wroth, we meet so seldom by stock or stone. Though ye know how to speak courteously, I am but muck, and manners⁶ lack. But Christ's mercy, and Mary and John — these are the grounds of all my bliss.

33. "In bliss I see thee blithely set, and I a man all mournful and downcast. Ye take full little heed thereof, though I oft suffer fierce harms; but now that I am here in your presence, I would beseech without debate that ye would tell me in sober assent what manner of life ye lead early and late; for I am full fain that your estate has truly come to worship and weal; the highway of all my joy it is, the ground of all my bliss."

³ Obscure lines. Possibly better, "Our Lord and Judge has ordained everything."

⁴ A difficult passage.

⁵ Literally, "made accord between."

⁶ MS. *marez mysse*, which might be translated "a botcher's failure."

¹ Reading *leues* for *loves* of the MS.

² The MS. *keue* is difficult.

34. "Now may bliss betide thee, sir!" then said that one so lovely of form and face; "and welcome be thou here, to walk and bide, for now thy speech to me is dear. Masterful mood and high pride, I promise thee, are thoroughly hated here. My Lord loves not to chide,¹ for meek are all who dwell near him; and when in his place thou shalt appear, be deeply devout in entire meekness. My Lord the Lamb loves ever such cheer; that is the ground of all my bliss.

35. "Thou sayst I lead a blissful life, and wouldest learn the degree thereof. Thou knowest well that when thy pearl departed I was full young and tender of age; but my Lord the Lamb through his Godhead, he took me to him in marriage, crowned me queen, in bliss to dwell for a length of days that ever shall endure. And endowed with all his heritage is his loved one; I am wholly his; his worth, his excellence, his nobility is the root and ground of all my bliss."

VIII

36. "Blissful one," said I, "can this be true? — be not displeased if I speak error — art thou the queen of the heavens blue, whom all this world must honour? We believe on Mary, whom grace sprang from, who bore in the flower of virginity a child. Who is it could remove the crown from her unless she surpassed her in some excellence? Now for her unique sweetness we call her the Phoenix of Araby, which flew peerless in its nature, like to the Queen of courtesy."

37. "Courteous Queen," then said that beautiful one, kneeling on the ground with face enfolded. "Matchless Mother and fairest Maid, blessed Beginner of every grace!" Then rose she up and gan pause, and spake to me at that time: "Sir, many chase and capture prey there;² but within this place are no supplanters; that Empress has all the heavens, and earth and hell are under her sway; yet none she will deprive of their heritage, for she is Queen of courtesy."

38. "The court of the kingdom of the living God has this property in its very

being: each that arrives therein is queen or king of all the realm, and yet never dispossesses another; but each one is fain of the others' having, and would that their³ crowns were worth five times as much — if their amending were possible. But my Lady, of whom Jesus sprang, she holds full high the empire over us all; and that displeases none of our company, for she is Queen of courtesy."

39. "In courtesy, as saith St. Paul, we are all members of Jesus Christ. So head and arm and leg and trunk⁴ belong to his body so true and good. Right so is every Christian soul a limb belonging to the Master of might. Then consider whether⁵ hate or any bitterness is rife or exists among thy limbs: thy head has neither anger nor resentment if thou bear a ring on arm or finger. So fare we all with love and liking to King and Queen⁶ by courtesy."

40. "Courtesy," said I, "and great charity I believe to be among you. But — let my speech not grieve you —⁷

thou raigest thyself over high in heaven, to make thee queen, who wast so young. What greater honour could he achieve that had endured in the cruel world, and lived in penance his whole life long, with bodily bale to buy him bliss? What greater worship could he attain than be crowned king by courtesy?

IX

41. "That courtesy is too free of deed if it be sooth that thou sayst. Thou didst not live two years among our people; thou knewest never how God to please nor to him pray, — no, neither Pater nor Creed. And made queen on the first day! I can not believe — so God me speed — that God would turn so wrongly aside; the rank of countess, damsel, by my faith, it were fair for thee to hold in heaven, — or else that of a lady of less degree. But a queen! — that is an attainment⁸ too great."

42. "There is no limit of his goodness," then said to me that worthy wight; "for all is truth that he appoints, and he can do

³ The companions'.

⁴ Literally, "navel"; most translate "nail."

⁵ Reading *where* for *what* of the text.

⁶ The Lamb and Mary.

⁷ A line missing.

⁸ The word *date* in this set of stanzas is difficult of translation, its significance being excessively strained.

¹ Perhaps "loves not chiding."

² Amending the MS. *here* to *pere*, = there, in your world. The line is difficult.

nothing but right. As Matthew tells in your mass, in the truthful gospel of God Almighty; in parable he gan it full readily divine, and likens it to heaven light. 'My realm,' he says, 'is like indeed to a lord that had a vineyard, I wot. The season of the year was come when to labour in the vineyard it was high time.

43. "'That time of year well know the hinds. The lord full early rose up to hire workmen to his vineyard, and finds there some to his purpose. Into accord they gan fall for a penny a day, and forth they go; they twine and work and take great pains, cut and bind and make it snug. About midmorn the lord to the market goes, and idle men finds he standing there. "Why stand ye idle?" he says to those. "Know ye not what day this is?"

44. "'Ere break of day hither are we come"; so was all together their answer given;¹ "We have stood here since rose the sun, and no man bids us do aught." "Go into my vineyard; do what ye can," so said the lord, and confirmed it.² "What reasonable hire by night be run, I will pay you in 'thought and deed.'" They went into the vineyard and wrought, and all day the lord went his way, and brought new men to his vineyard. Weillnigh was passed the precious day.

45. "'At the time of evensong, an hour before the sun goes down, he saw there idle men full strong, and said to them with sober voice, "Why stand ye idle all day long?" They said their labour was nowhere sought. "Go to my vineyard, yeomen young, and work and do that which ye may." Soon the world became right dark; the sun was down and it waxed late. To take their hire he summoned them; the term of the day was all passed.

X

46. "'The time of day the lord perceived, called to the reve, "Man, pay the company; give them the hire that I them owe. And, further, that none may reprove me, set them all in a row and give each one alike a penny. Begin at the last that stands low, till that thou to the first attain." And then the first gan to complain, and said that they

had travailled sore: "These but for an hour exerted themselves; it seems to us that we ought to have more."

47. "'More have we deserved, it seems to us, that have suffered the day's heat, than these that wrought not two hours; and thou dost make them like to us." Then said the lord to one of those, "Friend, I will cause thee no loss; take what is thine own and go. I hired thee at a penny for the whole day;³ why beginnest thou now to complain? Was not a penny thy covenant there? One may not plead for more than covenant. Why shouldst thou then ask more?"

48. "'Furthermore, is not my giving lawful for me, to do with mine what pleases me? Or else thou dost lift a malicious eye because I am good and deceive none."⁴ Thus shall I, quoth Christ, 'apportion it: the last shall be the first that attains, and the first the last, be he never so swift; for many are called, though few are chosen.'⁵ Thus poor men ever receive their part; though they may come late and be feeble, and though their labour ends shortly, the mercy of God is so much the more.

49. "More have I here of joy and bliss, of ladyship great and life's bloom, than all the wights in the world could win in the way of right and justice. Although I have but now begun — came into the vineyard at eventide — the Lord remembered my hire first; I was immediately paid in full. Others there were that gave more time, that toiled and sweat for long before, who yet of their hire nothing have — peradventure shall not for a year more."

50. Then further I spake and said outright, "Methinks thy tale unreasonable. God's righteousness is ready and evermore awake, or else Holy Writ is but a fable. In the Psalter⁶ is a clear verse that declares a definite point: 'Thou rewardest each one according to his deserts, thou high King ever foreordaining.' Now if thou came to payment before him that endured the long day, then is the less in work the greater in reward; and the longer one works, the less he receives."

³ MS. *agrete*, "for the whole," not perfectly clear.

⁴ It is difficult to make logic of the conjunctions in this passage.

⁵ The MS. *Be mykez* is difficult and no attempt is made to translate it.

⁶ Psalm 62: 12.

¹ The MS. reading "*sozt*" is difficult.

² The usual meaning of the MS. *made it tozt* would be, "was reluctant, made difficulties about it."

XI

51. "Of more and less in God's Kingdom," the gentle one said, "there is no distinction. For there is each man paid alike, whether little or much be his worth. For the gentle Chieftain is no niggard, whether he deal soft or hard. He pours his gifts like water from a spring, or floods from an exhaustless deep. Large is the franchise of the man who ever stood in awe of Him that rescues from sin;¹ no bliss is withheld² from him,³ for the grace of God is great enough.

52. "But now, in order to overcome me, thou declarest that I have wrongly taken my penny here. Thou sayest that I that came too late, am not worthy so great hire. Where didst thou ever know any man abide so holy in his prayer that he in some way did not at length forfeit the reward of the clear heavens? And the older they were the oftener they did so: they left right and wrought wrong. Mercy and grace had to rescue them then, for the grace of God is great enough.

53. "But the innocent have enough of grace; as soon as they are born, lineally by the water of baptism they descend; then are they brought into the vineyard. Immediately the might of death causes their⁴ day with darkness to decline. The gentle Lord then pays his servants that wrought no wrong ere they went thence. They did his commandment, they were within the vineyard; why should he not allow their labour, and pay them first at the end of the time, for the grace of God is great enough?

54. "Well known it is that all mankind first was wrought to perfect bliss. Our first father forfeited that through an apple that he bit upon. We were all damned for that meat to die in grief out of delight; and after to wend to the heat of hell, therein to dwell without respite. But there came a remedy quickly; rich blood ran on the rood so rough, and precious water then in that extremity; the grace of God waxed great enough.

55. "Enough there waxed out of that well, blood and water from the broad wound: the blood bought us from the bale of hell

and delivered us from the second death. The water that followed the glaive so grimly ground is baptism, the sooth to tell, that washes away the dreadful guilts by which Adam in death us drowned. Now is there naught in the round world between us and bliss that he has not withdrawn; and in happy hour is bliss⁵ restored, and the grace of God is great enough.

XII

56. "Grace enough the man may have who sins then anew, if he repent; but with sorrow and sighing he must it crave, and bide the pain thereto annexed; but right reason, that can not err, saves evermore the innocent; it is a doom that God never gave—that ever the guiltless should be harmed. The guilty may contrition reach and be through mercy haled to grace; but he that never stooped to guile—that innocent one is safe and right.

57. "Thus I know well in this case, two men to save is reasonable and good: the righteous man shall see his face, the harmless person shall come to him. The Psalter in a passage says it thus: 'Lord, who shall climb to thy high hill, or rest within thy holy place?' Himself to answer he is not slow: 'Who hath done no harm with his hands, that is of heart both clean and light, there shall his step ever be established.' The innocent is aye safe by right.

58. "The righteous man also shall approach that proper pile⁶ who takes not his life in vain, nor flatters his neighbour with any guile. This righteous one Solomon saw plain, how kindly our King⁷ gan him receive; by ways full straight he gan him lead,⁸ and showed him the realm of God awhile, as though to say 'Lo, yon lovely isle! thou canst it win if thou be wight.' But certainly, without peril, the innocent is aye safe by right.

59. "Aunt righteous men yet says one—David in the Psalter, if ever ye saw it—'Lord, draw thy servant never into judgment, for none living to thee is justified.' Therefore to court when thou shalt come where all our causes shall be tried, allege thy right to be received by this same speech that I have espied. But He on the cross

¹ An extremely difficult and uncertain passage. See Osgood's note.

² The meaning of MS. *reparde* is doubtful.

³ Literally, "them."

⁴ Literally, "the."

⁵ The MS. *pat*, subject of "is restored," is obscure.

⁶ i. e. castle, edifice, the new Jerusalem.

⁷ Manuscript dubious whereabouts.

⁸ Literally, "restrain."

that bloody died, grievously pierced through the hands, grant thee to pass, when thou art tried, by innocence, and not by right!

60. "Whoso can read aright, let him look on the book and be advised how Jesus walked with the former people, and men brought their children to him. For hap and health that from him went, they fairly prayed him to touch their children. His disciples wrongfully bade let be, and with their words stayed full many. Jesus then said to them sweetly, 'Away! Let the children to me forthwith; for such is the heavenly kingdom arrayed.' The innocent is aye safe by right.

XIII

61. "His mild disciples then Jesus to him called, and said his kingdom could no wight win but he came thither right as a child. Otherwise should he never come therein. Harmless, true, and undefiled, without mote or speck of soiling sin — when such as these knock on the door, quickly to them shall one unpin the gate. There is the bliss that can not cease, which the jeweller sought through precious stones, and sold all his goods, both linen and wool, to buy him a pearl that was flawless.

62. "'This flawless pearl, that bought is dear, for which the jeweller gave all his goods, is like the realm of the clear heavens,' so said the Father of field and flood; for it is perfect, clean, and clear; and round without end, and blithe of mood, and common to all that righteous were. Lo, even in the middle of my breast it stood. My Lord the Lamb, that shed his blood, he placed it there in token of peace. I rede thee forsake the frantic world and purchase thy flawless pearl."

63. "Oh, flawless pearl, in pearls pure, that bears," said I, "the pearl of price, who formed for thee thy fair figure? Who wrought thy weeds he was full wise. Thy beauty came never from Nature; Pygmalion painted never thy face; nor did Aristotle with his learning tell the nature of these properties. Thy colour passes the fleur-de-lys; thine angel-bearing so purely courteous — tell me, bright one, what kind of office bears the pearl so flawless?"

64. "My flawless Lamb, who all redeemed," quoth she, "my dear Destiny, chose me, unmeet, to be his mate. At a

certain time that union¹ became fitting — when I went from your dark world. He called me to his favour:² 'Come hither to me, my love so sweet, for mote nor spot is none in thee.' He gave me might and beauty too; in his blood he washed my weeds on the dais, and crowned me clean in virginity, and clad me in flawless pearls."

65. "Why, flawless bride that shines so bright, that has dignities so rich and great, what manner of thing may this Lamb be, who would wed thee unto his wife? Over all others didst thou climb so high to lead with him so stately³ a life? So many a comely lady⁴ in great suffering for Christ has lived, and thou hast all those dear ones driven out, and from that marriage all others kept — thou all alone, so stout and strong — a matchless maid and a flawless!"

XIV

66. "Flawless," replied that lovely queen, "unblemished I am, without blot, and that may I properly maintain; but 'matchless queen' then said I not. The Lamb's wives in bliss are we, a hundred and forty thousand together, as in the Apocalypse it is clear; St. John saw them all in a group on the hill of Sion — that seemly spot. The Apostle saw them in spiritual dream arrayed for the wedding in that hilltop, the new city of Jerusalem.

67. "Of Jerusalem I will in speech expound, if thou wilt know what his condition is — my Lamb, my Lord, my dear Jewel, my Joy, my Bliss, my Lover free. The prophet Isaiah of him spoke piteously — for his sweetness: 'That glorious, guiltless One that men slew for no deed of felony. As a sheep to the slaughter then was he led; and as a lamb that the clippers take in the field, so closed he his mouth to every query, when the Jews judged him in Jerusalem.'

68. "In Jerusalem was my Lover slain, and rent on the rood by villains cruel; all our griefs full ready to bear, he took on himself our heavy cares; with buffets was his face flayed that was so fair to look upon; for sin he accounted himself as nothing — he who never had sin of his own to control.

¹ Meaning doubtful. ² More literally, "gentleness."
³ Literally, "lady-like." ⁴ Literally, "comely one under comb."

For us he let himself be beaten and bent, and stretched upon the cruel beam, as meek as lamb that made no plaint. For us he suffered in Jerusalem;

69. "Jerusalem, Jordan, and Galilee, where baptized the good St. John — his words accorded with those of Isaiah. When Jesus gan toward him go, he said of him this prophecy: 'Lo, God's Lamb as true as stone, that does away the heavy sins that all this world has wrought.' Himself he wrought never one, yet on himself he took them all. His generation who can reckon, that died for us in Jerusalem?"

70. "Thus in Jerusalem my Lover sweet twice was accounted a lamb by true record of either prophet, for his mood so meek and all his bearing. The third time is meetly described in the Apocalypse. Amidst the throne, where saints sat, the apostle John saw him clearly, reading the book with square leaves, where seven signets were set together. And at that sight each power gan quail, in hell, in earth and Jerusalem.

XV

71. "This Jerusalem Lamb had never stain of other hue than wholly fair, which speck nor spot might touch, for the white wool so rich and full.¹ Therefore each soul that had never spot is to that Lamb a worthy wife; and, though each day a store he fetch, among us comes no other struggle nor strife, but each single one we would were five; — the more the merrier, so God me bless. In a great company our love thrives more in honour, and never less.

72. "Less of bliss can none bring to us who bear this pearl upon our breast, for they can have no stain who bear the crest of spotless pearl. Although our bodies moulder in the earth, and ye cry for sorrow without rest, we have thorough knowledge; by the death of One our hope is made perfect.² The Lamb gladdens us, our care is cast aside; he charms us all at every feast;³ each one's bliss is full and best, and never one's honour the less.

73. "Lest thou disbelieve my seemly tale, it is written in a passage of the Apocalypse. 'I saw,' says John, 'the Lamb great and strong, stand on the mount of Sion, and with him maidens an hundred thousand,

and four and forty thousand more. On all their foreheads written I found the Lamb's name, his Father's also. A cry from heaven I heard then like the voice of many waters running turbulently, and like the thunder leaping in the black crags; that sound was never less.

74. " 'Nevertheless, though it was a great shout and a loud voice, a note full new I heard them play; right pleasant was it to listen to. As harpers harp on their harps, that new song they sang full clear, in echoing notes a gentle lay. Full fairly they took up the tune together, right before God's chair; and the four beasts that him obey, and the elders so stately of mien, their song they sang never the less.'

75. "Nevertheless no one was ever so cunning, for all the craft that ever he knew, that of that song he could sing one note, except the band that follows the Lamb; for they are redeemed, far removed from the earth, as new fruit due to God. And to the gentle Lamb are they appointed as being like to himself of face and hue; for lying nor untrue tale never touched their tongue for any distress. That spotless band can never depart from the flawless Master."

76. "Nevertheless let my thoughts have place," said I, "my Pearl. Though I ask searching questions, it is not to tempt thy wit so keen, who to Christ's chamber art chosen. I am but muck and mire, and thou a lovely rose so rich; and thou abidest here by this blissful bank where living pleasure can never fail. Now, oh being of simplicity compact, I would ask thee one thing expressly, and though I be rude as a churl,⁴ let my prayer avail nevertheless.

XVI

77. "Nevertheless earnestly I entreat you — if ye can allow it to be done, — as thou art glorious without gall, do not deny my rueful boon. Have ye no homes in castle wall, no manor where ye may meet and dwell? Thou tellest me of Jerusalem, the rich and royal, where David great was dight on throne; but in these groves it cannot lie; but in Judea it is, that noble dwelling. As ye are altogether⁵ flawless, so should your dwellings be without blemish.

¹ Literally, "rank and rife." ² This passage is not entirely satisfactory. ³ Possibly, "mass."

⁴ The MS. *blow* is doubtful; possibly it is "flame."
⁵ Literally, "under moon," a rime-tag.

78. "This unblemished band thou speakest of, of thousands thronged so great a rout, it behoves you to have, without a doubt, a great city, — for ye are many. Such a lovely array of precious jewels, — 't were evil done that ye should dwell outside. And by these banks where I tarry I see no building anywhere about. I trow ye dwell alone and live retired, to look on the glory of this gracious stream. If thou hast other dwellings stout, now direct me to that fair castle."

79. "The castle thou meanest in the land of Judea," then said to me that precious being,¹ "that is the city which the Lamb founded to suffer in sorely for man's sake — namely, the old Jerusalem; for there the old guilt was slaked. But the new Jerusalem, that came of God's sending, the apostle in the Apocalypse took for his theme. The Lamb devoid of all black spots has borne thither his fair band; and as his flock is without fleck, so is his city without sin."

80. "Two cities are to be distinguished, both called Jerusalem nevertheless — which is to signify to you naught but 'city of God,' or 'sight of peace.'² In the one our peace was made complete: the Lamb chose it to suffer in with pain. In the other is naught but peace to glean, that shall last for ever and aye. That is the city that we press to after our flesh is laid to rot; there glory and bliss shall ever increase for the band without a spot."

81. "Spotless maid so meek and mild," then said I to that lovely flower, "bring me to that fair dwelling, and let me see thy blissful bower." The bright one said: "That will God deny; thou may not enter within his hill. But of the Lamb I have obtained for thee through great favour a sight thereof. Outwardly thou may see that clean cloister, but inwardly not a foot; to step in the street thou hast no vigour, unless thou were clean without a spot."

XVII

82. "If I this city shall to thee disclose, go up toward this river's head; and I abreast on this side shall follow till thou to a hill be come." Then would I no longer

bide, but glided by branches with lovely leaves, till I espied the hill, and gazed on the city as I pressed forward, revealed beyond the brook from me, that brighter shone than the sun with its shafts. In the Apocalypse is its fashion told, as describes it the apostle John.

83. As John the apostle saw it, so saw I that city of great renown, Jerusalem, so new and royally dight, as it was lighted from the heavens down. The burg was all of burned gold bright, like gleaming glass burnished clear, with gentle gems placed underneath; with bantels³ twelve set on a base, and foundations twelve of rich work. Each tier was a different stone; as in the Apocalypse the apostle John fairly describes this same town.

84. As John in his writ named these stones, I knew their names after his count. Jasper was the first gem called, that I on the first base descried; it gleamed green in the lowest row; sapphire held the second place; then the chalcedony without flaw in the third tier shone pale and pure; the emerald was the fourth, so green of hue; the sardonyx the fifth stone; the sixth, the ruby, as in the Apocalypse the apostle John distinguished it.

85. John added yet the chrysolite as the seventh gem in the foundation; the eighth the beryl clear and white; the twin-hued topaz the ninth inlaid; the chrysoprase the tenth is called; the gentle jacinth the eleventh; the twelfth, the fairest of all, the amethyst, purple blent with blue. The wall above the bantels was of jasper that shone like glistening glass. I knew it by his devising in the Apocalypse, the apostle John's.

86. As John devised I saw further. These twelve steps were broad and steep. The fair city stood above them right square, as long, as broad, as high; the streets of gold like sheer glass, the wall of jasper that glinted like light;⁴ the dwellings within were adorned with all kinds of jewelry that could be gathered together. Each side of the square stretched in this manner twelve furlongs space ere ever it ended, all squared

³ This perhaps means projecting courses of stone. The architectural details are not quite clear.

⁴ The MS. *glayre* may be our glare of an egg, practically equivalent to varnish, gum; or glare, brightness, shining; or the rare AS. *glæc*, glossed as "electrum," i.e. amber or a composition of gold and silver.

¹ Literally, "special spice."

² Such etymologizing of names is common in the Scriptures, and especially so in saints' legends.

in height and length and breadth, for John the apostle saw it measured.

XVIII

87. Yet more I saw as John describes it. Each side of that place had three gates; so twelve in succession I espied; the entrances covered with rich plates, and each gate of a margery, a perfect pearl that never fades. Each in scripture displayed a name of one of Israel's children following their dates—that is to say, as their birth was. The eldest aye first thereon was put. Such a light there gleamed in all the streets they needed neither sun nor moon.

88. Of sun nor moon they had no need; for God himself was their lamplight, the Lamb their lantern, forsooth. Through him gleamed the town all bright. Through wall and house my glances went, for their subtle clearness hindered in no wise the light. The high throne there might ye behold decked with all its array, as John the apostle well describes. The high God himself sat upon it. A river ran from out the throne, which was brighter than both the sun and moon.

89. Sun nor moon shone never so sweet as the plenteous flood from out that floor. Swiftly it swung through every street without filth or impurity or slime. Church was there none within the city; no chapel or temple was ever set there. The Almighty was their minster meet, the Lamb their sacrifice.¹ The gates were never closed, but evermore open at each street; there none enters to take his abode that bears any blemish beneath the moon.

90. The moon can gain no might therein; too spotty she is, of nature² too grim; and also there is never night. Why should the moon there her compass climb, and strive to match the glorious light which shines upon that river's brink? The planets are in too poor a plight, and the very sun far too dim. About the water are trees full bright that early bear twelve fruits of life. Twelve times a year they bear full plenteously, renew themselves at each moon.

91. So great a marvel under the moon might no fleshly heart endure, as when I gazed upon that city, so wondrous was the

fashion thereof. I stood as still as dazed quail for the strangeness of that glorious³ vision, so that I felt neither rest nor toil, so was I ravished with the pure radiance. For I dare say with sure conscience, that had a man in the body endured that joy, though all clerks had him in care, his life were lost under the moon.

XIX

92. Right as the great moon rises ere the day-gleam has quite gone down, so suddenly in wondrous wise I was ware of a procession. The whole city of rich device was suddenly full without any summons of such virgins, clad in the same guise, as was my blissful one in her crown; and crowned were they all in the same fashion, adorned with pearls and white weeds; on each one's breast was bounden fair the blissful pearl with great⁴ delight.

93. With great delight they glided together in the golden streets that gleamed as glass; hundreds of thousands I wot there were, and all of a suit were their liveries,—hard to know who had the gladdest mien. The Lamb proudly passed before, with his seven horns of clear red gold. Like precious pearls were his weeds. Toward the throne they go in company. Though they were many, no press ensued; but mild as modest maidens at mass, so passed they forth with great delight.

94. The delight that his coming inspired, too great were it to tell of. The elders, when he approached, fell prone at his feet. Legions of angels, gathered together, there cast incense of sweet smell. Then glory and glee were broached anew; and all sang for love of that fair Jewel; that sound might strike through the earth to hell, that the Virtues of heaven for joy gave forth. To love the Lamb in the midst of his troop I caught indeed a great delight.

95. Delight to describe the Lamb marvellously seized my mind. He was best, blithest, and most to prize, that ever I heard mentioned; so beauteous white were his weeds, his looks so simple, himself so courteous. But a wound full wide and wet showed near his heart, through the rent skin, and from his white side his blood

¹ Text *freuch*, of uncertain meaning.

² "Sacrifice" is the object of the obscure word *reget*, possibly meaning "to reproduce."

³ Literally, "body."

⁴ Reading doubtful. Possibly "without delay," a rime-tag something like *doun* translated "fair" in the same sentence.

sprang forth. Alas! thought I, who committed that crime? Any breast ought to have shrivelled for sorrow ere it had taken delight in such a deed.

96. The Lamb's delight none needed to doubt; that¹ he was hurt and had a wound, in his bearing was never apparent, so glorious glad were his glances. I looked among his fair troop, beholding how they were filled with life, and there I saw my little queen, that I weened had stood by me in the glade. Lord, much mirth was it she made among her mates that were so white! That sight made me think of wading over in the delight of my love-longing.

XX

97. Delight drove me in eye and ear; my man's mind melted to madness; when I saw my lovely one, I would be there, though she were withdrawn beyond the water. I thought that nothing could frighten me, shake my resolution, or give me pause; and to start into the stream should none hinder me, to swim the space, though I drowned there. But from that design I was deterred. When I was about to start astray into the stream I was recalled from that plan; it was not my Prince's pleasure.

98. It pleased him not that I so pressed overmarvellous meres in mad intent; though I was rash and rude in my haste, yet I was quickly restrained; for, right as I rushed to the bank, that very violence snatched me out of my dream. Then I wakened in that fair garden, my head laid upon the hill where my pearl fell to ground. I stretched

¹ Emending the MS. *paz* to *pat*.

and fell into a great fright; and sighing to myself I said, "Now may all be to that Prince's pleasure."

99. Yet it pleased me ill to be outcast so suddenly from that fair region, from all those sights so beauteous and bright. A heavy longing struck me into a swoon, and ruefully then I began to cry: "O pearl," quoth I, "of great renown, it was dear to me, that which thou didst teach in this true vision." If it be a true and soothfast speech, that thou so roamest in garland gay, then well is me in this dungeon of grief, that thou art dear to that Prince.

100. Had I aye inclined to that Prince's favour, and yearned for no more than was given to me, and held me there in true intent, as the pearl prayed me that was so advanced — as sooner drawn to God's presence — to more of his mysteries had I been led. But ever would man seize more of fortune than may by right cleave to him; therefore my joy was soon taken away, and I cast from the country that lasts for aye. Lord, mad they are that strive against thee, or proffer thee aught against thy pleasure.

101. To please the Prince or gain his peace is full easy for the good Christian, for I have found him both day and night, a God, a Lord, a Friend full fine. On this mound this fortune I experienced, bowed down with pity for my pearl; and afterwards I betook it to God, in the dear joy and memory of Christ, whom, in the form of bread and wine, the priest shows us every day. May he grant us to be his lowly servants, and precious pearls unto his pleasure.

Amen. Amen.

SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNYȝT¹

[FYTTE THE FIRST]

I

Sipen² þe sege & þe assaut watȝ sesed at Troye,
 þe borȝ brittened & brent to brondez & askez,
 þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wroȝt,
 Watȝ tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe ;
 Hit watȝ Ennias þe athel, & his highe kynde,
 þat sipen depreced prouinces,³ & patrounes bicomē
 Welneȝe of al þe wele in þe west iles,
 Fro riche Romulus to Rome richis hym swyȝe,
 With gret bobbaunce þat burȝe he biges vpon fyrst,
 & neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat ;
 Ticius (turnes) to Tuskan, & teldes bigynnes ;
 Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes ;
 & fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
 On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he setteȝ,
 wyth wyne ;⁴

Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
 Bi syȝeȝ hatȝ wont þer-inne,
 & oft hope blysse & blunder
 Ful skete hatȝ skyfted synne.

II

Ande quen⁵ þis Bretayn watȝ bigged bi þis burn ryȝh,
 Belde bredden þer-inne, baret þat lofden,
 In mony turned⁶ tyme tene þat wroȝten ;
 Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
 þen in any oper þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
 Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges
 Ay watȝ Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle ;
 For-þi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
 þat a selly in siȝt summe men hit holden,
 & an outrage awenture of Arthureȝ wondereȝ,
 If ȝe wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,
 I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I in toun herde,
 with tonge ;

As hit is stad & stoken,
 In stori stif & stronge,
 With lel letteres loken,⁶
 In londe so hatȝ ben longe.

¹ The symbol ȝ is the Anglo-Saxon form of *g*, and is a modification of the Latin letter. It was retained by later scribes principally for the guttural *gh* as in *knyȝt*, for the *y*-sound at the beginning of a word, as in *ȝet*, and for the final *z*-sound, as in *askez*. The spellings *watȝ*, *hatȝ* for *was* and *has* are peculiar.

² þ is the Anglo-Saxon symbol for *th*, which lasted till the 15th century, and as *y* till later — e. g., in *ye = the*. It is the old rune "thorn."

³ *u* and *v*, originally the same symbol, are both written *u*.
⁴ These "bobs" especially, and the rhyming 4-line "wheel" at the end of the stanzas, are often almost meaningless, and difficult to translate.

⁵ The *qu* is the Northern way of writing Anglo-Saxon *hw*, our *wh*.
⁶ Such "conceited," "precious" or far-fetched terms and tags are characteristic of the later alliterative verse.

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

FYTTE THE FIRST

1. After the siege and the assault had ceased at Troy, the city been destroyed and burned to brands and ashes, the warrior who wrought there the trains of treason was tried for his treachery, the truest on earth.¹ This was Aeneas the noble; he and his high kindred afterwards conquered provinces, and became patrons of well nigh all the wealth in the West Isles. As soon as rich Romulus turns him to Rome, with great pride he at once builds that city, and names it with his own name, which it now has; Ticius turns to Tuscany and founds dwellings; Longobard raises homes in Lombardy; and, far over the French flood, Felix Brutus establishes Britain joyfully on many broad banks, where war and waste and wonders by turns have since dwelt, and many a swift interchange of bliss and woe.

2. And when this Britain was founded by this great hero, bold men loving strife bred therein, and many a time they wrought destruction. More strange things have happened in this land since these days than in any other that I know; but of all the British kings that built here, Arthur was ever the most courteous, as I have heard tell. Therefore, I mean to tell of an adventure in the world, which some count strange and extraordinary even among the wonders of Arthur. If ye will listen to this lay but a little while, I will tell it forthright as I heard it told in town, as it is set down in story that cannot be changed, long written in the land in true words.

3. This King lay royally at Camelot at Christmas tide with many fine lords, the best of men, all the rich brethern of the Round Table, with right rich revel and careless mirth. There full many heroes

tourneyed betimes, jousted full gaily; then returned these gentle knights to the court to make carols.² For there the feast was held full fifteen days alike with all the meat and the mirth that men could devise. Such a merry tumult, glorious to hear; joyful din by day, dancing at night. All was high joy in halls and chambers with lords and ladies as pleased them best. With all the weal in the world they dwelt there together, the most famous knights save only Christ, the loveliest ladies that ever had life, and he, the comeliest of kings, who holds the court. For all this fair company were in their prime in the hall, the happiest troop under heaven with the proudest of kings. Truly it would be hard to name anywhere so brave a band.

4. When New Year was fresh and but newly come, the court was served double on the dais. As soon as the king with his knights was come into the hall, the chanting in the chapel came to an end; loud was the cry there of clerks and others. Noel was celebrated anew, shouted full often; and afterwards the great ones ran about to take handsel;³ called aloud for New Year's gifts, paid them out briskly, busily discussed the gifts; ladies laughed full loud, though they had lost; and he that won was not wroth, that may ye well trow. All this mirth they made till the meat time. When they had washed, worthily they went to their seats, the best man ever above, as it best behoved. Queen Guinevere full beauteous was set in the midst, placed on the rich dais adorned all about. Fine silk at the sides, a canopy over her of precious cloth of Toulouse, and tapestries of Tars,⁴ that were embroidered and set with the best gems that money could buy. Truly no man could say that he ever beheld a comelier lady than she, with her dancing gray eyes.

5. But Arthur would not eat till all were

¹ Construction clear, though sense odd. Antenor and Aeneas were the traitors who in the mediæval story of Troy handed over the city to the Greeks. Antenor remained unpopular, but Aeneas suffered no loss of reputation. See Lydgate's *Troy Book* in the publications of the Early English Text Soc., Bk. IV, l. 4539 f.

² Dancing and singing in a ring.

³ New Year's gifts of good omen.

⁴ Oriental figured stuff.

served. He was so merry in his mirth, and somewhat childlike in his manner; his life pleased him well; he loved little either to lie long or to sit long, so busied him his young blood and his wild brain. And another custom moved him also, that he through chivalry had taken up; he would never eat upon such a dear day before he was told an uncouth tale of some adventurous thing, of some great marvel that he could believe, of ancient heroes, of arms, or of other adventures; or unless some person demanded of him a sure knight to join with him in jousting, to incur peril, to risk life against life, trusting each in the other, leaving the victory to fortune. This was the king's custom whenever he held court at each goodly feast among his free company in the hall. And so with undaunted face he strides stoutly to his seat on that New Year, making great mirth with everybody.

6. Thus the great king stands waiting before the high table, talking of trifles full courteously. The good Gawain was placed there beside Guinevere, and Agravain of the Hard Hand sat on the other side, both of them the king's sister's sons and full sure knights. Bishop Baldwin at the top begins the table, and Ywain, Urien's son, ate by himself. These were placed on the dais and honorably served, and after them many a good man at the side tables. Then the first course came in with blare of trumpets, which were hung with many a bright banner. A new noise of kettle-drums with the noble pipes, wild and stirring melodies wakened the echoes; that many a heart heaved full high at their tones. Dainties of precious meats followed, foison of fresh viands, and on so many dishes that it was difficult to find place before the people to set on the cloth the silver that held the several courses. Each man as he himself preferred partook without hesitation. Every two¹ had twelve dishes between them, good beer and bright wine both.

7. Now will I tell you no more of their service, for everybody must well understand that there was no lack of opportunity for the people to take their food.² Another

noise full new suddenly drew nigh, for scarcely had the music ceased a moment, and the first course been properly served in the court, than there burst in at the hall door an awesome being, in height one of the tallest men in the world; from the neck to the waist so square and so thick was he, and his loins and his limbs so long and so great, that half giant I believed him to have been, or, at any rate, the largest of men, and withal the handsomest in spite of his bulk, that ever rode; for though his back and breast were so vast, yet his belly and waist were properly slim; and all his form according, full fairly shaped. At the hue of his noble face men wondered; he carried himself in hostile fashion and was entirely green.

8. All green was this man and his clothing; a straight coat sat tight to his sides; a fair mantle above, adorned within; the lining showed, with costly trimming of shining white fur; and such his hood also, that was caught back from his locks and lay on his shoulders, the hem well stretched;³ hose of the same green, that clung to his calf; and clean spurs under, of bright gold upon silk bands richly barred, and shoes⁴ on his shanks as the hero rides. And all his vesture verily was clean verdure, both the bars of his belt, and the other beauteous stones that were set in fine array about himself and his saddle, worked on silk. It would be too difficult to tell the half of the trifles that were embroidered there, with birds and flies, with gay gauds of green, — the gold ever in the middle; the pendants of the poitreil, the proud crupper, the bits, — and all the metal was enamelled; the stirrups that he stood on were coloured the same, and his saddle bow likewise, and his fine reins⁵ that glimmered and glinted all of green stones. The horse that he rode on was of the same colour too, a green horse, great and thick, a steed full stiff to guide, in gay embroidered bridle, and one right dear to his master.

9. This hero was splendidly dressed in green; and the hair of his head matched that of his horse;⁶ fair flowing locks enfolded his shoulders; a beard as big as a bush hung

¹ It was extremely sumptuous having only two at a mess; i. e. only two sharing the same cup and platter.

² It seems to make somewhat better sense if we transpose, as has here been done, lines 132 and 133; otherwise this passage means that a second course came in heralded by new music.

³ Translation doubtful.

⁴ Word doubtful.

⁵ Our "reins" is a mere stop-gap. The MS. has the puzzling *sturtles*.

⁶ Translating *hors swete* of the MS. as "horse's suite."

over his breast; and it, together with his splendid hair that reached from his head, was trimmed evenly all round above his elbows, so that half his arms were caught thereunder in the manner of a king's hood,¹ that covers his neck. The mane of that great horse was much like it, very curly and combed, with knots full many folded in with gold wire about the fair green,—always one knot of the hair, another of gold. The tail and the forelock were twined in the same way, and both bound with a band of bright green, set with full precious stones the whole length of the dock, and then tied up with a thong in a tight knot; where rang many bells full bright of burnished gold. Such a steed in the world, such a hero as rides him, was never beheld in that hall before that time. His glances were like bright lightning, so said all that saw him. It seemed as if no man could endure under his blows.

10. He had neither helm nor hauberk, nor gorget, armour nor breastplate, nor shaft nor shield to guard or to smite; but in his one hand he had a holly twig, that is greenest when groves are bare, and an axe in his other, a huge and prodigious one, a weapon merciless almost beyond description; the head had the vast length of an anell-yard, the blade all of green steel and of beaten gold; the bit² brightly burnished, with a broad edge, as well shaped for cutting as sharp razors. The stern warrior gripped it by³ the steel of its stout staff, which was wound with iron to the end of the wood and all engraven with green in beauteous work. A lace was lapped about it, that was fastened at the head, and tied up often along the helve, with many precious tassels attached on rich embroidered buttons of the bright green. This hero turns him in and enters the hall, riding straight to the high dais, fearless of mischief. He greeted never a one, but looked loftily about, and the first word that he uttered was: "Where is the governor of this company? Gladly I would see that hero and speak with him."

He cast his eye on the knights and rode

¹ The word *capados* here translated "hood" is rare. It might conceivably mean "camail," a protection of mail for the neck and part of the head, that hung down from or under the helm.

² "Bit" is still used for the cutting edge of an axe.

³ Not in the MS.

fiercely up and down, stopped and gan ponder who was there the most renowned.

11. All gazed fixedly on the man, for everybody marvelled what it might mean, that a knight and a horse could have such a colour: as green grown as the grass, and greener, it seemed; shining brighter than green enamel on gold. All were amazed who stood there, and stalked nearer to him, with all the wonder in the world what he would do; for many marvels had they seen, but such never before. Therefore for phantom and faery the folk there deemed it; and for that reason many a noble warrior was slow to answer, and all were astonished at his voice and sat stone still in a deep silence through the rich hall. Their voices⁴ sank as though they had suddenly fallen asleep. I deem, however, that it was not all for fear, but somewhat for courtesy. But now let him to whom all defer undertake the wight.

12. Then Arthur before the high dais beheld that adventure, and saluted the stranger properly, for never was he afraid, and said, "Sir, welcome indeed to this place. I am called Arthur, the head of this hostel. Light courteously down and tarry, I pray thee; and whatso thy will is we shall wit after."

"Nay, so help me he that sits on high," quoth the hero. "To dwell any time in this house was not my errand; but because the fame of this people is lifted up so high, and thy town and thy men are held the best, the stoutest in steel gear on steeds to ride, the wightest and the worthiest of the world's kind, and proved opponents in other proper sports; and here courtesy is known, as I have heard tell,—it is this that has enticed me hither certainly at this time. You may be sure by this branch that I bear here that I pass in peace and seek no quarrel; for if I had set out with a company in fighting fashion, I have a hauberk at home and a helm both, a shield and a sharp spear shining bright, and other weapons to wield, I ween well also; but since I wished no war, my weeds are softer. Now if thou be as bold as all men tell, thou wilt grant me graciously the game that I ask."

Arthur knew how to answer, and said: "Sir courteous knight, if it is battle that thou cravest, thou shalt not fail of a fight here."

⁴ Possibly "faces" or "looks."

13. "Nay, I demand no fight; in faith I tell thee there are but beardless children about on this bench. If I were hasped in arms on a high steed there is no man here to match me, their might is so weak. Therefore I crave in this court a Christmas game, for it is Yule and New Year, and here are many gallants. If there be a man in this house who holds himself so hardy, is so bold in his blood, so rash in his head, that he dares stiffly strike one stroke for another, I shall give him as my gift this rich gisarm, this axe, that is heavy enough, to handle as he likes; and I shall abide the first blow as bare as I sit. If any warrior be wight enough to try what I propose, let him leap lightly to me and take this weapon — I quit-claim it forever, let him keep it as his own — and I shall stand him a stroke firmly on this floor. At another time, by our Lady, thou wilt grant me the boon of dealing him another blow; I will give him despite of a twelvemonth and a day. Now hie, and let us see quickly if any herein dare say aught."

14. If he had astonished them at first, stiller were then all the retainers in hall, the high and the low. The warrior on his steed settled himself in his saddle, and fiercely his red eyes he reeled about; bent his thick brows, shining green; and waved his beard, awaiting whoso would rise. When none would answer him he coughed aloud, stretched himself haughtily and began to speak; "What! Is this Arthur's house," said the hero then, "that is famous through so many realms? Where is now your pride and your conquests, your fierceness, and your wrath and your great words? Now is the revel and the renown of the Round Table overcome by the word of a single man; for all tremble for dread without a blow shown."

With this he laughed so loud that the lord grieved; the blood shot for shame into his fair face. He waxed as wroth as the wind; and so did all that were there. The king so keen of mood then stood near that proud man.

15. "Sir," said he, "by heaven thy asking is foolish; and as thou hast demanded folly, it behooves thee to find it. I know no man that is aghest of thy great words. Give me now thy gisarm, for God's sake, and I will grant thy boon that thou hast bidden."

Quickly he leaped to him and caught at his hand; and the other alights fiercely on foot. Now Arthur has his axe, and grips the helve; he whirls it sternly about as if he meant to strike with it. The bold stranger stood upright before him, higher than any in the house by a head and more; with stern cheer he stood there, stroked his beard, and with cool countenance drew down his coat, no more afraid or dismayed for Arthur's great strokes than if some one had brought him a drink of wine upon the bench.

Gawain, that sat by the queen, turned to the king: "I beseech now with all courtesies that this affair might be mine."

16. "Would ye, worthy lord," quoth Gawain to the king, "bid me step from this bench and stand by you there, — that I without rudeness might leave this table, and that my liege lady liked it not ill — I would come to your help before your rich court; for methinks it is obviously unseemly that such an asking is made so much of in your hall, even though ye yourself be willing to take it upon you, while so many bold ones sit about you on the bench; than whom, I ween, none under heaven are higher of spirit, nor more mighty on the field where strife is reared. I am the weakest, I know, and feeblest of wit; and to tell the truth there would be the least loss in my life. I am only to praise forasmuch as ye are my uncle; no other nobility than your blood know I in my body. And since this adventure is so foolish, it belongs not to you; I have asked it of you first; give it to me. Let this great court decide¹ if I have not spoken well."

The heroes took counsel together and they all gave the same advice, — to free the crowned king and give the game to Gawain.

17. Then the king commanded Gawain to rise from the table; and he right quickly stood up and made himself ready, kneeled down before the king and took the weapon; and Arthur lovingly left it to him, lifted up his hand and gave him God's blessing, and gladly bade him be hardy both of heart and of hand. "Take care, cousin," quoth the king, "that thou give him a cut; and if thou handle him properly, I readily believe

¹ This word is supplied. Perhaps "speak" would be more conservative.

that thou shalt endure the blow which he shall give after."

Gawain goes to the man with gisarm in hand; and he boldly awaits him, shrinking never a whit. Then speaks to Sir Gawain the knight in the green; "Rehearse we our agreement before we go farther. First I conjure thee, hero, how thou art called, that thou tell me it truly, so that I may believe it."

"In good faith," quoth the knight, "Gawain am I called, who give you this buffet, whatever befalls after; and at this time twelvemonth I am to take from thee another with whatever weapon thou wilt, and from no wight else alive."

The other answers again, "Sir Gawain, so thrive I as I am heartily glad that thou shalt give this blow."

18. "By Gog," quoth the green knight, "Sir Gawain, it delights me that I am to get at thy fist what I have requested here; and thou hast readily and truly rehearsed the whole of the covenant that I asked of the king, save that thou shalt assure me, sir, by thy troth, that thou wilt seek me thyself wheresoever thou thinkest I may be found upon the earth, and fetch for thyself such wages as thou dealest me today before this rich company."

"Where should I seek thee?" quoth Gawain. "Where is thy place? I know never where thou livest, by him that wrought me; nor do I know thee, knight, thy court, nor thy name. But tell me truly the way and how thou art called, and I will use all my wit to win my way thither, — and that I swear thee, for a sooth, and by my sure troth."

"New Year will suffice for that; no more is needed now," quoth the man in green to Gawain the courteous. "To tell the truth, after I have received thy tap, and thou hast smitten me well, I shall promptly inform thee of my house and my home and mine own name. Then thou mayest inquire about my journey and hold promise; and if I speak no speech, then thou speedest the better, for thou mayest linger at ease in thy land and seek no further. Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest."

"Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawain as he strokes his axe.

19. The green knight on the ground prepared himself properly. With the head a

little bowed he disclosed the flesh. His long, lovely locks he laid over his crown, and let the naked nape of his neck show for the blow. Gawain gripped his axe and gathered it on high; the left foot he set before on the ground, and let the axe light smartly down on the naked flesh,¹ so that the sharp edge severed the giant's bones, and shrank through the clear flesh² and sheared it in twain, till the edge of the brown steel bit into the ground. The fair head fell from the neck to the earth, and many pushed it with their feet where it rolled forth. The blood burst from the body and glistened on the green. Yet never faltered nor fell the hero for all that; but stoutly he started up with firm steps, and fiercely he rushed forth where the heroes stood, caught his lovely head, and lifted it up straightway. Then he turned to his steed, seized the bridle, stepped into the steel bow and strode aloft, holding the head in his hand by the hair; and as soberly the man sat in his saddle as if no mishap had ailed him, though he was headless on the spot. He turned his trunk about — that ugly body that bled. Many a one of them thought that he had lost his reason.

20. For he held the head straight up in his hand; turned the face toward the highest on the dais; and it lifted up the eyelids and looked straight out, and spoke thus much with its mouth, as ye may now hear: — "Look Gawain, that thou be ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek loyally, hero, till thou find me; as thou hast promised in this hall in the hearing of these knights. To the green chapel go thou, I charge thee, to receive such a blow as thou hast dealt. Thou deservest to be promptly paid on New Year's morn.³ As the knight of the green chapel many men know me; therefore, if thou strivest to find me, thou shalt never fail. And so come, or it be-hoooves thee to be called recreant."

With a wild rush he turned the reins, and flew out at the hall door — his head in his hand — so that the fire of the flint flew from the foal's hoofs. To what country he vanished knew none there; no more than they wist whence he was come. The king and Gawain roared with laughter at that

¹ Some such word has to be supplied after naked.

² "Grease" in the original.

³ Morris's punctuation of this passage has been altered.

green man; but this adventure was reckoned a marvel among men.

21. Though the courteous king wondered in his heart, he let no semblance be seen, but said aloud to the comely queen with courteous speech, "Dear dame, today be never dismayed; well becoming are such tricks at Christmas, in lack of entertainment, to laugh and sing about among these pleasant carols of knights and ladies. Nevertheless I may well go to my meat, for I can not deny that I have seen a marvel." He glanced at Sir Gawain and said cheerfully, "Now, sir, hang up thine axe; it has hewn enough." And it was put above the dais to hang on the tapestry where all men might marvel at it, and by it avouch the wonderful happening. Then they turned to the board, these heroes together — the king and the good knight — and the keen men served them double of all dainties, as was most fitting; with all manner of meat, and minstrelsy both. They spent that day in joy until it came to an end. Now take care, Sir Gawain, that thou blench not for the pain to prosecute this adventure that thou hast taken on hand.

FYTTE THE SECOND

1. This hanel of adventures had Arthur at the beginning, in the young year, since he yearned to hear boasting. Although there was little news when they went to their seats, now they are provided with stern work,¹ their hands quite full. Gawain was glad to begin those games in the hall; but it would not be surprising if the end were heavy; for though men be merry in mind when they have much drink, yet a year runs full swiftly, and yields never the same; the beginning full seldom matches the end. And so this Yule went by, and the year after it, each season in turn following the other. After Christmas came the crabbed Lent, that tries the flesh with fish and more simple food. But then the weather of the world quarrels with winter, and though the cold still clings, the clouds lift; copiously descends the rain in warm showers, and falls upon the fair earth. Flowers show there; green are the garments both of fields and of groves; birds hurry to build, and lustily

they sing for the solace of the soft summer, that follows thereafter. Blossoms swell into bloom in rows rich and rank; and lovely notes are heard in the beauteous wood.

2. After the season of summer with the soft winds, when Zephyrus blows on seeds and herbs, happy is the plant that waxes then, when the dank dew drops from the leaves, to await the blissful glance of the bright sun. But then harvest hastens and hardens it soon: warns it to wax full ripe against the winter. He drives with drought the dust to rise, — from the face of the earth to fly full high. The wild wind of the welkin wrestles with the sun. The leaves fall from the bough and light on the ground. The grass becomes all gray that erst was green. Then all ripes and rots that which formerly flourished; and thus runs the year in yesterdays many; and winter returns again without asking any man,² till the Michelmas moon has come in wintry wise. Then thinks Gawain full soon of his anxious voyage.

3. Yet till Allhallows day with Arthur he lingers; and Arthur made a feast on that festival for the hero's sake, with great and gay revel of the Round Table. Knights full courteous and comely ladies all for love of that man were in sorrow; but nevertheless they spoke only of mirth; and many a joyless one there made jests for his gentle sake. After meat he mournfully addresses his uncle, and speaks of his passage, and openly he says — "Now, liege lord of my life, leave I ask of you. Ye know the cost of this case; I do not care to tell you even a trifle of its dangers;³ but I am ready to start for the fray no later than tomorrow morn, to seek the man in the green, as God will guide me."

Then the best of the castle gathered together, Ywain and Erec, and others full many, Sir Dodinel de Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence, Lancelot and Lyonel and Lucan the Good, Sir Bors and Sir Bedever, big men both, and many other proud ones, with Mador de la Port. All this company of the court came nearer to the king, to counsel the knight, with care at their hearts. There was much deep grief felt in the hall that so worthy a one as Gawain should go on that errand, to endure a sorry dint and

¹ Morris's punctuation of this passage has been changed.

² Passage a bit vague.

³ Morris's punctuation altered.

deal none himself with his brand. But the knight ever made good cheer, and said, "Why should I swerve from stern and strange destiny? What can a man do but try?"

4. He lingered there all that day, and on the morn made ready. Early he asked for his arms, and they were all brought. First a carpet of Toulouse was stretched over the floor, and much was the gilt gear that gleamed upon it. The brave man stepped thereon and handled the steel, clad in a doublet of costly Tars, and afterwards a well wrought hood, closed on top and bound within with a glistening white fur. Then they put the sabatons¹ upon the hero's feet, lapped his legs in steel with fair greaves, to which were attached well polished poeynes² fastened about his knees with knots of gold. Fine cuisses then, that well enclosed his thick, brawny thighs, they attached with thongs. Next the decorated burnie³ of bright steel rings upon precious stuff encased the hero, and well burnished braces upon his two arms, with elbow-pieces goodly and gay and gloves of plate, and all the goodly gear that might avail him at that time, with rich coat armour, gold spurs well fastened, and a sure brand girt about his side by a silken sash.

5. When he was hasped in arms his harness was rich; the least latchet or loop gleamed with gold. So, harnessed as he was, he heard his mass, offered and adored at the high altar. Then he came to the king and his court; courteously took his leave of lords and ladies; and they kissed him, and convoyed him, entrusting him to Christ. By that time was Gringolet ready, and girt with a saddle that gleamed full gaily with many gold fringes; everywhere nailed anew, prepared for that emergency. The bridle, barred about, was bound with bright gold; the decoration of the breastplate and of the fine housings, the crupper and caparison, accorded with the saddle-bow, and all was adorned with rich red gold nails, that glittered and gleamed like the gleam of the sun. Then he took the helm and quickly kissed it. It was stoutly stapled and stuffed within; it was high on his head, hasped behind, with a light urison⁴ over the ventail,⁵ embroidered and bound with the best gems on a

broad silken border; and birds on the seams like painted popinjays⁶ preening themselves here and there; turtle-doves and true-loves⁷ thickly interlaced. As many birds there were as had been in town for seven winters. The circlet that surrounded his crown was even more precious — a device of gleaming diamonds.

6. Then they showed him the shield, that was of sheer gules, with the pentangle painted in pure gold. He took it by the baldric and cast it about his neck; and it became the hero passing fair. And why the pentangle pertains to that noble prince I mean to tell you, though it should delay me. It is a sign that Solomon set formerly as a token of truth, by its own right, for it is a figure that holds five points, and each line overlaps and locks in another; and throughout it is endless; and the English call it everywhere, as I hear, the endless knot. Therefore it suits this knight and his clear arms, forever faithful in five things, and in each of them five ways. Gawain was known for good and as refined gold, devoid of every villainy, adorned with virtues. Therefore, the new⁸ pentangle he bore on shield and coat, as the man most true of speech and the knight gentlest of behaviour.

7. First, he was found faultless in his five wits; and again the hero failed never in his five fingers; and all his affianced in this world was in the five wounds that Christ received on the cross, as the creed tells; and where-soever this man was hard bestead in the mêlée his pious thought was in this above all other things — to take all his strength from the five joys that the courteous Queen of Heaven had of her child. For this cause the knight had her image comely painted in the greater half of his shield, that when he looked down thereupon, his courage never abated. The fifth five that I find that the hero used, were generosity and fellowship above all things, his purity and his courtesy that never swerved, and pity that passes all qualities. These very five were more surely set upon that warrior than upon any other. Now all these⁹ were established fivefold in this knight, and each one was fastened in another that had no end, and they were fastened on five points that never failed, nor met anywhere, nor sundered

¹ steel shoes.

² knee pieces.

³ coat of mail.

⁴ scarf.

⁵ visor.

⁶ parrots.

⁷ true-lover's knots.

⁸ Should it be now?

⁹ These five larger virtues.

either, but finished always without end at each corner, wherever the game began or concluded. Therefore on his fair shield this knot was painted royally with red gold upon red gules. That is the true pentangle as the people properly call it. Now was the gay Gawain armed. He caught up his lance right there, and with a good-day he went for evermore.

8. He spurred his steed with the spurs and sprang on his way so swiftly that the stone struck out fire after him. All who saw the gentle man sighed in heart, and the heroes said all together to each other in their love for that comely knight, "By Christ, it is a shame that thou, hero, must be lost, who art so noble of life. In faith it is not easy to find his match upon the earth. To have acted more warily would have been better counsel; and to have made yon dear one a duke; it would well become him to be a brilliant leader of people here. This would have been better than to have him utterly destroyed, given over¹ to an elvish man for mere boasting pride. Who ever knew any king to take such counsel as to suffer knights to be so tricked for a Christmas game." Much warm water welled from eyes when that seemly sire departed from the dwellings that day. He made no stop, but wightily went his way; many a tiresome path he rode, as I heard the book tell.

9. Now rides this hero, Sir Gawain, through the realm of Logres in God's behalf, though to him it seemed no play. Oft alone companionless he lodged at night in places where he found not before him the fare that he liked. No company had he but his foal by friths and downs, nor nobody but God to talk with by the way; till that he approached nigh unto North Wales. He kept all the isles of Anglesey on the left side, and fared over the fords by the forelands, over at the Holy Head, till he again took land in the wilderness of Wirrel. There dwelt but few that loved either God or man with good heart. And ever as he fared he asked of men that he met if they had heard any talk of a green knight of the green chapel in any spot thereabout, and all nickerd him with nay, that never in their life saw they any man of such green hue. The knight took strange roads by many a rough bank. His cheer changed full oft ere he saw that chapel.

¹ The meaning of the verb is doubtful.

10. Many a cliff he overclimbed in strange countries; far sundered from his friends, lonely he rode. At each ford or water where the hero passed it were strange if he found not a foe before him, and that so foul and so fell that it behooved him to fight. So many marvels in the mountains there the man found that it were too tedious to tell of the tenth part. Sometimes he warred with serpents, and with wolves also, sometimes with savages that dwelt in the cliffs; both with bulls and bears, and boars sometimes; and giants that assailed him from the high fell. Had he not been doughty and stern, and served God, doubtless he had been dead and slain full oft. But the warfare tried him not so much but that the winter was worse, when the cold clear water shed from the clouds, and froze ere it might fall to the barren earth. Near slain with the sleet he slept in his iron more nights than enough on naked rocks, where clattering from the crest the cold burn ran, and hung high over his head in hard icicles. Thus in peril and pain and plights full hard through the country wanders this knight all alone till Christmas Eve. At that tide to Mary he made his moan that she might direct his riding and lead him to some dwelling.

11. Merrily on the morn he rides by a mount into a forest full deep, that was strangely wild. High hills were on each side, and woods beneath of hoar oaks full huge, a hundred together. The hazel and the hawthorn were twined all together, covered everywhere with rough ragged moss, with many unblithe birds upon bare twigs that piteously piped there for pain of the cold. The knight upon Gringolet rides all alone under the boughs, through many a moss and mire, mourning for his trials, lest he should never survive to see the service of that Sire who on that very night was born of a lady to quell our pain. And therefore sighing he said: "I beseech thee, Lord, and Mary, that is mildest mother so dear, for some harbour where I might properly hear mass and thy matins tomorrow. Meekly I ask it, and thereto earnestly I pray my pater and ave and creed." He rode in his prayer and lamented for his misdeeds. Oft-times he blessed himself, and said, "Christ's cross speed me."

12. The hero had not crossed himself more than thrice ere he was aware in the

wood of a dwelling on a hill, above a clearing, on a mount, hidden under the boughs of many a huge tree about the ditches; a castle the comeliest that ever knight owned, set on a prairie, a park all about, with its beautiful palace, pinnaced full thick, and surrounded with many a tree for more than two miles. The hero gazed at the castle on that one side as it shimmered and shone through the fair oaks. Then he humbly doffed his helm and devoutly he thanked Jesus and St. Julian — who are both gentle — who courteously had directed him and harkened to his cry. "Now bon hostel," quoth the man, "I beseech you yet!" Then he spurs Gringolet with his gilt heels, and he full fortunately takes the way to the chief road, that soon brought the hero to the bridge-end in haste. The bridge was securely lifted, the gates locked fast; the walls were well arrayed; no wind blast did it fear.

13. The hero that sat on his horse, abode on the bank of the deep double ditch that stretched to the place. The wall sank in the water wondrous deep, and again a full huge height it towered aloft, of hard hewn stone up to the top courses, corbelled under the battlement in the best manner; and above fine watch-towers ranged along, with many good loop-holes that showed full clean. A better barbican that hero never looked upon. And farther within he beheld the high hall, with towers set full thickly about, and fair and wondrous high filioles with carved tops cunningly devised. Chalk-white chimneys enough he saw that gleamed full white on the battlements. So many painted pinnacles were set everywhere, built so thick among the crenellations of the castle, that it verily appeared cut out of paper. Fair enough it seemed to the noble knight on his horse if he could only attain the shelter within, to harbour in that hostel, while the holiday lasted. He called, and soon there appeared on the wall a right pleasant porter who took his message and greeted the knight errant.

14. "Good sir," quoth Gawain, "would you go my errand to the high lord of this house to crave harbour?"

"Yea, by Peter," quoth the porter; "and truly I trow that ye are welcome, sir, to dwell while you like."

Then the man went again quickly, and a crowd of folk with him, to receive the knight. They let down the great draw and

eagerly poured out, and kneeled down on their knees upon the cold earth to welcome the hero as it seemed to them proper. They opened up wide the broad gate for him and he raised them courteously, and rode over the bridge. Several attendants held his saddle while he alighted, and afterwards good men enough stabled his steed. Then knights and squires came down to bring this hero joyfully into the hall. When he lifted up his helm people enough hurried to take it at his hand, in order to serve the courteous one; his sword and his shield they took too. Then he greeted full courteously the knights each one; and many a proud man pressed there to honour that prince. All hasped in his high weeds, they led him to the hall, where a fair fire burned fiercely upon the hearth. Then the lord of the people came from his chamber to meet courteously the man on the floor. He said, "Ye are welcome to wield as you like what is here; all is your own to have at your will and commandment." "Gramercy," quoth Gawain. "Christ reward you for it." Like glad heroes either folded the other in his arms.

15. Gawain looked on the man who greeted him so goodly, and thought it a bold hero that owned the castle, a huge warrior for the nonce, and of great age. Broad and bright was his beard, and all beaver-hued. Firm-gaited was he on his stalwart limbs; with a face as fierce as fire, and a free speech; and to the hero he seemed well suited indeed to govern a nation of good people.

The lord turned to a chamber and promptly commanded to give Gawain a retinue to serve him in lowly wise; and there were ready at his bidding men enough, who brought him to a bright bower where the bedding was curtains of pure silk with clear gold hems, and covertures right curious with comely borders, adorned above with bright fur. Curtains running on ropes, red gold rings, tapestries of Toulonse and Tars hung on the wall, and under foot on the floor of the same pattern. There with mirthful speeches the hero was despoiled of his burnie and of his bright weeds. Quickly men brought him rich robes that he might pick and choose the best for his change. As soon as he took one and was wrapped therein, that sat upon him seemly with sailing skirts, the hero by his visage verily seemed to well

nigh every man in looks glowing and lovely in all his limbs; it seemed to them that Christ never made a comelier knight. Wherever in the world he were, it seemed as if he might be a prince without peer in the field where fell men fight.

16. A chair before the chimney,¹ where charcoal burned, was prepared for Sir Gawain richly with cloths and cushions, upon counterpanes that were both fine. And then a beauteous mantle was cast on the man, of a brown fabric richly embroidered, and fairly furred within with the best skins, all of ermine; the hood of the same. And he sat on that settle in seemly rich attire, and warmed him thoroughly; and then his cheer mended. Soon a table was raised up on trestles full fair, and set with a clean cloth that showed clear white, napkins, salt-cellar, and silver spoons. The hero washed when he would and went to his meat. Men served him seemly enough, — double fold as was proper — with pottages various and suitable, seasoned in the best manner; and many kinds of fish, some baked in bread, some broiled on the coals, some boiled, some in sauces savoured with spices; and always discourse so pleasant that it pleased the warrior. Full freely and often the hero called it a feast right courteously, when all the retainers together praised him as courteous.² "Do this penance now, and soon things will be better!" Right mirthful was he for the wine that went to his head.

17. Then they questioned and inquired sparingly in skilful queries put to the prince himself, till he courteously acknowledged that he was of the court which noble Arthur holds alone, who is the rich, royal king of the Round Table; and that it was Gawain himself that sits in the house, by chance come for that Christmas. When the lord had learned that he had that hero, he laughed aloud, so dear it seemed to him; and all the men in the castle made much joy at appearing promptly in the presence of him who contains in his own person all

worth and prowess and gracious traits, and is ever praised; above all the men in the world his renown is the greatest. Each warrior said full softly to his companion — "Now shall we see courteous turns of behaviour, and the blameless forms of noble talking; what profit there is in speech may we learn without asking since we have taken that fine father of nurture. God has indeed given us his grace, who grants us to have such a guest as Gawain, on account of whose birth men sit and sing for joy. This hero will now teach us what distinguished manners are; I think that those who hear him will learn how to make love."

18. When the dinner was done and the dear ones risen, the time was nigh arrived at the night. Chaplains took their way to the chapels, and rang full loudly, as they should, to the melodious evensong of the high time. The lord turns thither, and the lady also. Into a comely closet daintily she enters. Gawain joyfully proceeds, and goes thither straightway. The lord takes him by the mantle and leads him to his seat, recognizes him openly and calls him by his name, and says he is the welcomest wight in the world. And Gawain thanked him thoroughly and either embraced the other, and they sat soberly together during the service. Then the lady desired to look on the knight, and came from her closet with many fair maidens. But she was fairer than all the others in flesh and face, in skin and form, in complexion and demeanour — more beautiful than Guinevere, it seemed to the hero. He walked through the chancel to greet that gracious one. Another lady led her by the left hand, that was older than she; an ancient lady it seemed, and one highly honoured by the knights about her; but unlike to look on were the ladies, for if the younger was fair, yellow was the other. Rich red on the one bloomed everywhere; rough wrinkled cheeks rolled on the other. The kerchiefs of the one brodered with many clear pearls, openly displayed her breast and her bright throat, which shone clearer than snow that falls on the hills. The other covered her neck with a gorget, that wrapped her black chin in milk-white pleats. Her forehead was completely enveloped in silken folds, adorned and tricked³ with small ornaments;

³ The precise, but not the general, meaning of the two participles is uncertain.

¹ In the old meaning of fireplace, fire-back, or grate.
² Possibly the host, and not Gawain, is the subject of this sentence, which then might be translated: "Full freely and oft the host called it a feast (i.e. made the feaster welcome) right courteously, when all the retainers praised him (Gawain or the host?) as courteous." In the next two sentences the host is pretty certainly the subject. With this interpretation cf. *Macbeth*, iii. 4, 33: "The feast is sold that is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making, 'tis given with welcome."

and naught was bare of that lady but the black brows, the two eyes, the nose, and the naked lips; and those were ugly to behold and oddly bleared. A gracious lady in the land one might call her forsooth! Her body was short and thick, her hips round¹ and broad. More pleasant to look on was the being she led.

19. When Gawain looked on that beauteous one who gazed graciously, he took leave of the lord, and went toward them. The elder he saluted, bowing full low; the lovelier he took a little in his arms; he kissed her comely, and knightly he greeted her. They welcomed him, and he quickly asked to be their servant if it pleased them. They took him between them and led him conversing to the fireplace in the parlour; and straightway they called for spices, which men speeded to bring them unsparingly, and the pleasant wine therewith each time. The lord leaped merrily up full often, and saw to it that the mirth never faltered. Gaily he snatched off his hood and hung it on a spear, and exhorted them to win it as a prize — he to have it² who could make the most mirth that Christmas tide. "And I shall try, by my faith, with the help of my friends³ to compete with the best, ere I lose my apparel." Thus with laughing mien the lord makes merry in order to glad Sir Gawain with games in the hall that night. When it came time, the king commanded lights; Sir Gawain took his leave and went to his bed.

20. On the morn when as every man knows God was born to die for us, joy waxes in every dwelling in the world for his sake. So it did there on that day, with many dainties at meats and meals, right quaint dishes, and brave men on the dais dressed in their best. The old ancient wife sits the highest, the courteous lord placed by her, as I trow; Gawain and the gay lady together just in the middle, as the courses⁴ properly come; and afterwards the rest throughout all the hall, as it seemed best to them, each man in his degree was properly served. There was meat, there was

mirth, there was much joy, that it were arduous for me to tell thereof, though to note it I took pains belike.⁵ But yet I know that Gawain and the lovely lady took comfort in each other's company, in the choice play of their sharp wits, and the pure courtesy of their modest talk; their disport surpassed indeed that of any royal game. Trumps and drums came playing loudly; each man minded his own business, and they two minded theirs.

21. Much delight was taken there that day, and the second; and the third followed as pleasantly. The joy of St. John's day was gentle to hear of; and it was the last of the festival, the people considered. There were guests to go upon the grey morn; therefore wondrous late they sat up and drank the wine, danced full gayly with sweet carols. At the last, when it was late, they took their leave, each good man to wend on his way. Gawain gave his host good day; but the good man takes him, and leads him to his own chamber, by the fireplace; and there he draws him aside and properly thanks him for the great worship that he had granted him in honouring his house on that high tide, in embellishing his castle with his good cheer. "Indeed, sir, while I live I shall be the better that Gawain has been my guest at God's own feast."

"Gramercy, sir," quoth Gawain, "in good faith the merit is yours; all the honour is your own, — the high King reward you; and I am your man to work your behest in high and in low as I am bound by right."

The lord eagerly strives to hold the knight longer; but Gawain answers him that he can in no wise.

22. Then the hero asked of him full fairly what extraordinary deed had driven him at that dear time from the king's court, to go all alone so boldly, ere the holidays were wholly over.

"For sooth, sir," quoth the hero, "ye say but the truth; a high errand and a hasty had me from these dwellings; for I am summoned to such a place as I know not in the world whitherward to wend to find it. I would not for all the land in Logres fail to reach it on New Year's morn — so our Lord help me. Therefore, sir,

⁵ The clause literally translated is insignificant; we expect something like "and yet I should fall for all my pains."

¹ The meaning of *bay* is doubtful.

² These four words supplied.

³ This phrase may go with "lose," thus aggravating the joke.

⁴ This word (*messe*) can refer to the courses (the food), or to the "mess" (the two persons eating together, i.e. using the same goblet, platter, etc.).

this request I require of you here, that ye tell me truly if ever ye heard tale of the green chapel, where in the world it stands, and of the knight green in colour that keeps it. There was established by statute an agreement between us that I should meet that man at that landmark if I could but survive. And of that same New Year there now lacks but little, and by God's Son I would gladlier look on that person — if God would let me — than wield any possession in the world. Therefore, indeed — by your good will — it behooves me to wend; I have now at my disposal barely three days; and I were as fain fall dead as fail of mine errand."

Then laughing quoth the lord, "Now it behooves thee to stay; for I shall direct you to that spot by the time's end — the green chapel upon the ground. Grieve you no more; for ye shall be in your bed, sir, at thine ease some days yet, and set out on the first of the year and come to that place at mid-morn, to do what you like. Stay till New Year's day; and rise and go then. One shall set you on your way; it is not two miles hence."

23. Then was Gawain full glad, and merrily he laughed; "Now I thank you especially for this above all other things; now that my quest is achieved, I shall dwell at your will, and do whatever else ye decide."

Then the sire seized him and set him beside him, and let the ladies be fetched to please them the better. Fair entertainment they had quietly among themselves; the lord in his jovial, friendly demeanor behaved as a man out of¹ his wits that knew not what he did. Then he spake to the knight, crying loud, "Ye have agreed to do the deed that I bid. Will ye hold this best here at once?"

"Yea, sir, forsooth," said the true hero, "while I stay in your castle I shall be obedient to your hest."

"Since ye have travelled from afar," quoth the warrior, "and then have sat late with me, ye are not well nourished, I know, either with sustenance or with sleep. Ye shall linger in your loft and lie at your ease tomorrow till mass time; and go to meat when ye will with my wife, who shall sit

with you and comfort you with her company till I return home; and I shall rise early and go hunting." Gawain grants all this, bowing courteously.

24. "Yet further," quoth the hero, "let us make an agreement. Whatsoever I win in the wood, it shall be yours; and whatsoever fortune ye achieve, exchange with me therefor. Sweet sir, swap we so, swear truly, whichever one of us gets the worse or the better."

"By God," quoth Gawain the good, "I consent thereto; and whatever game you like, agreeable it seems to me."

"On this beverage just brought the bargain is made," said the lord of that people; and both laughed.

Then they drank and played and amused² themselves, these lords and ladies, so long as it pleased them; and then with polite demeanour and many fair gestures, they stood up and lingered a while, and talked quietly, kissed full comely, and took their leave. With many a gay servant and gleaming torches each hero was brought to his bed full softly at the last. Yet before they went to bed they oft rehearsed the covenants. The old lord of that people knew well how to keep up a jest.

FYTTE THE THIRD

1. Full early before the day the folk arose; the guests that would go called their grooms, and these hastened to saddle the horses, arrange their gear, and truss their mails. The great ones arrayed themselves to ride, leaped up lightly and caught their bridles, each wight on his way where it well pleased him.

The dear lord of the land was not the last; arrayed for the riding, with retainers full many, he ate a sop³ hastily after he had heard mass, and took his way quickly with his bugle to the field. By the time that any daylight gleamed upon earth, he with his heroes were mounted on their high horses. Then these hunters that understood it, coupled their hounds, unclosed the kennel doors and called them thereout, blew blithely on bugles three simple calls. At this the brachets⁴ bayed and made a wild noise, and the hunters chastised and turned

¹ *Wolde* in the text is translated as a corruption of some such word as "was lacking," or "wandered."

² Word doubtful.

³ Took a light repast.

⁴ Hounds that hunt by scent.

back those that wandered off, — a hundred hunters of the best there were, as I have heard tell. To their stations the trackers went; hunters cast off the couples; and then arose for the good blasts great uproar in that forest.

2. At the first noise of the quest the game quaked; the deer moved down into the dale, dazed for dread; hurried to the height; but quickly they were hindered by the beaters, who cried stoutly. They let the harts with the high heads go their way, the wild bucks also with their broad palms,¹ for the generous lord had forbidden that there should any man meddle with the male deer in the close season. But the hinds were held back with "Hay!" and "Ho!" and the does driven with great din to the deep glades. There might one see as they ran the flight of arrows; at each turn under the boughs out flew a shaft, that savagely bit on the brown hide with full broad heads. How they leaped and bled and died by the banks! And ever the bounds with a rush eagerly followed them; hunters with shrill horn hastened after with such a resounding cry as if cliffs had cracked. What game escaped the men who shot was all run down and torn at the stands. The deer² were pestered at the heights, and worried at the waters; the people were so alert at the low stations, and the greyhounds so great, that got them quickly and pulled them down as fast as a man could see. The lord, shouting for joy, shot and alighted full oft, and passed the day thus with joy till the dark night.

3. So this lord sports by the eaves of the linden wood, and Gawain the good man lies in his gay bed; reposes till the day light gleams on the walls, under the beautiful coverlets, curtained about. And as he fell into a doze, faintly he heard a little din at the door, then distinctly;³ and he heaved up his head out of the clothes, caught up a corner of his curtain a little, and watched warily in that direction to see what it might be. It was the lady, loveliest to behold, who drew the door to after her right slyly and quietly, and turned toward the bed. The hero grew bashful and laid himself down cunningly and pretended that he slept. And she stepped quietly, and stole to his bed,

cast up the curtain, and crept within, and seated herself full softly on the bedside, and stayed there surprisingly long, to see when he should awake. The man lay pretending a full great while, bothered in his conscience what this affair might mean or amount to. Marvellous it seemed to him. But yet he said to himself, "More seemly would it be to find out by asking what she would." Then he waked, and stretched, and turned to her; unlocked his eyelids, and made believe he was amazed, and crossed himself with his hand, to be the safer for his prayer. With chin and cheek full sweet, of mingled white and red, right lovely she looked, with her small laughing lips.

4. "Good morrow, Sir Gawain!" said that fair lady. "Ye are a careless sleeper when one can enter thus. Now ye are certainly taken; unless we can make a truce I shall bind you in your bed, ye may be sure of that!" All laughing the lady shot those jests.

"Good morrow, fair one," quoth Gawain the blithe. "I shall be at your disposal, and that pleases me well, for I yield me outright and pray for grace, — and that is the best course, I judge, for I am in straits." And thus he returned the jests with many a blithe laugh. "But would ye, lovely lady, grant me leave, free⁴ your prisoner and bid him rise, I would leave this bed and dress myself better. Then I could talk with you in more comfort."

"Nay, forsooth, fair sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed; I shall manage you better. I shall tie you up securely,⁵ and afterwards talk with my knight that I have caught; for I ween well, ye are indeed Sir Gawain, whom all the world worships whereso ye ride. Your honour, your courtesy, is heartily praised, by lords, by ladies, by all alive; and now ye are here, forsooth, and we all alone. My lord and his people are gone far away; the other men in their beds, and my maidens also; the door shut and closed with a strong hasp; and since I have in this house him whom all like, I shall make good use of my time while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person, to do whatever you wish; I am perforce, and must remain, your servant."

¹ The flat, broad part of the horn.

² Subject supplied.

³ Meaning not quite sure.

⁴ Meaning doubtful.

⁵ A mere guess: the line appears to be literally "I shall cover you here the other half also."

5. "In good faith," quoth Gawain, "a great privilege it seems to me — though I be not now he that ye speak of. To reach such reverence as ye rehearse here, I am a man unworthy, I know well. By God, I should be glad — if it seemed good to you — to do what I might in speech or in service to enhance your worship;¹ — it were a pure joy."

"In good faith, Sir Gawain," quoth the gay lady, "if I should speak ill of the fame and the prowess that pleases all others, or esteem it light, it would show but small discernment.² But there are ladies enough who were liefer have this courteous one in their power — as I have thee here, — to dally dearly with your dainty words, to comfort themselves and dispel their cares, — than much of the treasure and gold that they have. But I praise the Lord who rules the skies that through his grace I have wholly in my hand that which all desire."

Great cheer she that was so fair of face made him; the knight with discreet speeches answered her every proposal.

6. "Madame," quoth the merry man, "Mary reward you, for in good faith I have found your generosity noble. People judge a person's deeds largely from the accounts of others;³ but the praise that they accord my deserts is but idle. It is simply your own nobility, who know nothing but good."

"By Mary," quoth the gracious one, "methinks it is otherwise; for were I worth all the store of women alive, and all the wealth of the world were in my hands, and I should bargain and choose to get me a lord, then for the good traits that I have found in the knight here, of beauty and graciousness and gay seeming, and from what I have heard before and hold in this case to be true, there should no hero in the world be chosen before you."

"Indeed, worthy one," quoth the hero, "ye might⁴ have chosen much better; but I am proud of the estimation that ye put upon me; and as your devoted servant I hold you my sovereign, and your knight I become; and Christ pay you for it."

Thus they spoke of various things till past the midmorn; and ever the lady be-

haved as if she loved him much. But the hero fared with caution and made courteous pretences. "Though I were the fairest of women," mused the lady, "little love would he show, because of the danger that he seeks without reproach — the blow that may slay him, but must needs be undergone." The lady then asked leave, and he granted her full soon.

7. Then she gave him good day, and of a sudden laughed; and as she stood there she astonished him with right sharp words: "Now may he that speeds each speech, pay you for this entertainment; but that ye are Gawain, it goes not in my mind."⁵

"Wherefore?" quoth the hero; and eagerly he asks, afraid lest he had failed in the performance of his design.⁶ But the lady blessed him and spake in this wise: "A man as good as Gawain is properly held — and courtesy is closed so entirely in him — could not easily have lingered so long with a lady but he had on some trifling excuse or other⁷ courteously craved a kiss."

Then said Gawain, "Indeed, be it as you like; I shall kiss at your commandment as becomes a knight, and fear⁸ lest he displease you; so urge that plea no more." She comes nearer at that and takes him in her arms; stoops graciously down and kisses the man. They courteously entrust each other to Christ. She goes forth at the door without more ado, and he prepares to rise, and hurries amain; calls to his chamberlain, chooses his weeds, steps forth blithely to mass when he is ready; and then he goes to his meat, behaving always courteously, and makes merry all day till the bright moon rises. Never was a hero fairer entertained by two such worthy dames, the older and the younger. Much disport they make together.

8. And ever the lord of the land is bound on his sport, to hunt in holts and heath at barren hinds. Such a sum of does and of other deer he slew there by the time the sun was low, that it were a marvel to estimate. Then eagerly they all flocked together at the last; and quickly of the slain deer they made a quarry. The leaders

⁵ The negative is supplied.

⁶ Possibly, "in some form of courtesy."

⁷ Literally, "By some touch of some trifle at some tale's end."

⁸ "Fear" is an emendation by Morris; the clause is obscure.

¹ The passage is none too clear.

² The last clause is obscure in the text.

³ The passage is obscure. ⁴ "might" supplied.

hastened thereto with men enough; gathered the greatest of grease,¹ and proceeded properly to undo² them as the occasion demands. Some that were there tried them at the assay³ and found two fingers of fat on the leanest of all. Afterwards they slit the slot,⁴ seized the arber,⁵ cut it free with a sharp knife, and tied it⁶ up. Next they cut down along the four limbs and rent off the hide; then they opened the belly, took out the paunch, cutting eagerly, and laid aside the knot.⁷ They began at the throat again and skilfully divided the weasand from the windpipe and threw out the guts. Then they cut out the shoulders with their sharp knives, and pulled them through by a little hole, so as to have whole sides. Next they divided the breast, and cut it in two; and once more they began at the throat, split the beast quickly right up to the crotch, took out the advancers,⁸ and immediately severed all the fillets by the ribs, and took them off properly along the backbone even to the haunch, — all of which hung together. Then they heaved it up whole and cut it off there; and that they took for the numbles,⁹ as it is rightly called. At the fork of the thighs they cut the flaps behind; hastily they hewed the carcass in two, and severed it along the backbone.

9. Both the head and the neck they hewed off then, and afterwards they sundered the sides swiftly from the chine, and the corbie's fee¹⁰ they cast in a green tree. Then they pierced either thick side through by the rib, and hung them each by the hocks of the haunches — each man for his fee, as it befell him to have it. Upon a skin of a fair beast they fed their hounds with the liver and the lights, the leather of the paunches, and bread bathed in blood mingled thereamong. Loudly they blew the prize, and bayed their hounds; then they started to carry home their meat, blowing full stoutly many loud notes. By the

time daylight was done the band had all arrived at the comely castle, where the knight is quietly waiting in comfort beside a bright fire. When the lord arrived and Gawain met him, there was joy enough.

10. Then the lord commanded to gather in the hall all the household, and both the ladies to come down with their maids. Before all the folk on the floor he bade men fetch his venison before him; and all in merry sport he called Gawain, told him the number of the choice beasts, and showed him the fat meat cut from¹¹ the ribs; "How like you this play? Have I won the prize? Have I properly earned thanks by my woodcraft?"

"Yes, indeed," quoth the other hero; "here is the fairest store that I saw this seven year in the season of winter."

"And all I give you, Gawain," quoth the host, then; "for by our plighted covenant you can claim it as your own."

"That is true," replied the hero, "and I say to you the same; I too have won this worthy thing within doors; and I am sure that with quite as good will it belongs to you." He throws his arms about his fair neck and kisses him as courteously as he knew how. "Take you there my merchandise; I have won no more; though I should give it up willingly even if it were greater."

"It is good," quoth the good man; "gramercy therefor. Perchance it might be better if you would tell me where you won this same favour by your own¹² wit."

"That was not the agreement," said he; "ask me no more, for ye have got all that belongs to you, be sure of that."

They laughed and made merry in low tones; then they went quickly to supper with new dainties enough.

11. And afterwards as they sat by a fireplace in a chamber, servants poured to them off the choice wine; and again in their jesting they agreed to make the same bargain on the morning that they made before, — whatsoever chance betide to exchange their winnings at night when they met, whatsoever new they win. They made this agreement before all the court, and the beverage was brought forth merrily at that time.¹³ Then at length they politely took leave; and everybody hurried to bed.

¹ The correct hunting term for "the fattest."

² Cut up.

³ Probably at the side of the neck, or on the brisket.

⁴ Probably at the hollow of the breast bone.

⁵ The gullet probably.

⁶ The *schyre* is presumably the "arber"; though in 1. 2256 it appears to be the skin of the neck or nape.

⁷ I.e. the entrails, with the gullet knotted to prevent the filth from escaping.

⁸ This titbit is sometimes called a part of the numbles.

⁹ A choice cut; hence, capriciously, our humble-pie.

¹⁰ A bit of the offal for the crows.

¹¹ Literally "upon." ¹² Possessive uncertain.

¹³ A drink ratifies the agreement — as before.

When the cock had crowed and cackled but thrice, the lord had leaped from his bed; likewise his followers each one, so that the meat and the mass were promptly despatched, and the troop ready for the chase in the wood ere any day sprang. With hunters and horns they passed through the plains, and uncoupled the racing hounds among the thorns.

12. Soon they heard the cry of the dogs by a marsh side. The huntsman encouraged the hounds that first caught the scent, hurled sharp words at them with a great noise. The hounds that heard it hastened thither quickly, and fell immediately to the scent, forty at once. Then there rose such a resounding cry of gathered hounds that the rocks about rang. The hunters cheered them with horn and with mouth; then all together they swung in a troop between a pool in that wood and a wild crag. On a hill, beside a cliff at the side of the bog, where the rough rock was rudely fallen, they fared to the finding, and the hunters after them. The men surrounded both the rock and the hill, because they knew well that he was within them, — the beast that the bloodhounds were proclaiming there. Then they beat on the bushes and bade him rise up, and he savagely rushed out athwart the men, the most formidable of swine. Long since had he left the herd on account of his age, for he was a huge beast, the greatest of boars. His grinders when he grunted grieved many, for at his first burst he thrust three to the earth, and sped hastily forth at great speed without respite. And they hallooed "High!" full loudly, and cried "Hay, hay!" With horns to mouth lustily they blew the recheat.¹ Many were the merry cries of men and of hounds that hastened after this boar with hue and cry to kill him. Full oft he bides at bay, and maims the pack in the mêlée. He hurts many of the hounds and grievously they howl and yell.

13. The hunters pushed forward then to shoot at him, aimed at him with their arrows and hit him often. But the shafts that struck on his shields,² give way at the pith, and the bars would not bite on his brawn though the shaven shafts shivered in pieces; the head hopped out again where³ever it

hit. But when the dints of their keen strokes scared him, then mad for destruction he rushed on the men, did them sore hurt where he hurled forth, and many a one grew wary thereat and gave back a little. But the lord on a light horse hurries after him, blowing his bugle like a bold hero. He winds the recheat as he rides through thick groves, following this wild swine till the sun declined. Thus they drive on the day with such doings while our lovely hero lies comfortably in his bed at home in clothes full rich of hue. The lady did not forget; she came to greet him; full early she was by him to change his mind.

14. She comes to the curtain and peeps at the knight. Sir Gawain at once welcomes her worthily, and she returns his greeting right promptly, seats herself softly by his side, laughs openly, and with a lovely look addresses these words to him: "Sir, if ye be Gawain, it seems to me a very strange thing that a man of such quality should not follow the conventions of good society; and should after making acquaintance with a person cast him utterly from his mind. Thou hast already forgotten what I taught you yesterday in the best language that I knew."

"What is that?" quoth the hero. "Forsooth I know not. If what ye say be true, I am to blame."

"Yet I taught you about kissing," replied the fair lady; "wherever a countenance is known, quickly to claim a kiss; that becomes every knight who practices courtesy."

"Cease such speech, my dear lady," said the ready man. "I durst not claim it lest I should be denied. If I proposed and were refused, I should certainly be wrong in proffering."

"By my faith," quoth the lovely dame, "ye cannot be refused. Ye are strong enough to compel it by strength if ye pleased, supposing any were so ill-bred as to deny you."

"Yea, by God," said Gawain, "your speech is good; but violence is considered discourteous among my people, as is any gift that is not given with a good will. I am at your command to kiss when ye like. Ye may begin when ye please, and leave off whenever it likes you."

The lady stoops down and gracefully

¹ A call for collecting the hounds.

² The tough skin of the flanks.

kisses his face. They converse long of the fears and joys of love.

15. "I should like to know from you, sir," said the peerless lady, "if it vexes you not, — what might be the reason that so young and so gallant person as ye now are, one so courteous and so knightly as ye are known everywhere to be, *have never spoken of love*.¹ For in relating the pains of true knights, the chief thing praised in all of chivalry is the royal sport of love, — and the science of arms: it is the title, token, and text of their works; how heroes for their true love adventured their lives, endured for their sweethearts doleful hours, and afterwards avenged themselves by their valour; dispersed their care, and brought bliss to bower, with plenteous rewards for themselves. And ye are the most renowned knight of your time; your fame and your worship walks everywhere, — and now I have sat by you here two separate times, yet have I never heard from your head a single word that pertained at all to love, less or more. And ye, that are so courteous and so distinguished in your vows, ought willingly to show and teach to a young thing some tokens of the art of true love. Why are ye so rude who are so praised? Is it that ye deem me too dull to hearken to your dalliance? For shame! I came hither all alone to sit and learn from you some accomplishment: do teach me part of your skill while my lord is from home."

16. "In good faith," quoth Gawain, "God reward you! Great is the entertainment, and huge the pleasure to me, that so worthy a one as ye should come hither, and take pains with so poor a man, and play with your knight in any wise; it delights me. But to take upon myself the task of expounding true love, of touching upon the themes of that text, and tales of arms before you, who I wot well have more knowledge of that sort by the half than I or a hundred such have, or ever shall have so long as I live, — that were a manifold folly by my troth, dear one. But I would work your will with all my might, highly beholden to you as I am; and I wish evermore to be your servant, so God save me."

Thus the fair lady besought him, and

tried him oft, for to have won him to wrong, — whatever it was she purposed; but he defended himself so fairly that no fault appeared, nor any evil on either side; they knew nought but joy. They laughed and played a long time, till at last she kissed him, took her leave fairly, and went her way.

17. Then the hero bestirred himself and rose to the mass; and afterwards their dinner was dight and splendidly served. The hero sported with the ladies all day, but the lord raced over the land full oft, following his uncouth swine, that rushed along the banks and bit in sunder the backs of his best brachets.² There he abode at his bay till bowmen broke it, and maugre his head made him move forth. Many fell arrows there flew when the folk gathered about, but yet at times he made the stoutest to start; till at the last he was so weary he could no more run; but with the haste that he might he won to a hole in a cleft by a rock, where the burn runs. He got the bank at his back and began to scrape; the ugly froth foamed from the corners of his mouth, and he whet his white tusks. It was not pleasant for all the bold hunters that stood about him to approach him even remotely; and to go nigh him durst none for fear of harm. He had hurt so many before, that all seemed then full loath to be more torn with the tusks of that savage and crazed beast.

18. When the knight came himself, reining his steed, and saw him bide at the bay near his men, he lighted nimbly down, left his courser, pulled out a bright brand and boldly strode forth, and hurried fast through the stream where the fell one abode. The wild creature was ware of the wight with weapon in hand, and heaved on high his hairs; so fiercely he snorted that many feared for their lord lest to him befell the worse. The swine rushed directly upon the hero, so that man and boar were both in a heap in the wildest of the water; but the boar had the worse, for the man marked him well as they first met and skillfully set his point exactly in the slot,³ pierced him up to the hilt so that his heart split, and he gave way squealing and went quickly down the water. A hundred hounds seized him and fiercely bit on him. Men

¹ The words in italics are rashly supplied by the translator. For several lines here the construction is unclear.

² hounds. ³ The proper piercing spot in the chest.

brought him to land and the dogs finished him.¹

19. There was blowing of the prize² on many a loud horn, high halloing aloft by mighty hunters; brachets bayed the beast as the masters bade who were the chief huntsmen of that swift chase. Then a wight that was wise in woodcraft begins skilfully to unlace³ this boar. First he hews off its head and sets it on high; and afterwards splits him all down his rough back, and takes out the bowels and singes them on the coals; then with bread mingled with these, he rewards his hounds. Afterwards he cuts the brawn in fine broad shields, and has out the hastlets⁴ in the proper manner. And now they bind the halves all whole together, and afterwards stoutly hang them on a stiff staff. Now with this same swine they take their way home. The boar's head was borne before the warrior who slew him at the stream through the force of his own strong hand. It seemed long to him until he saw Sir Gawain in the hall; then he called, and Gawain came promptly to take his fees there.

20. The lord jested⁵ full loudly, and merrily he laughed when he saw Sir Gawain; with pleasure he spoke. The good ladies were called and the household gathered. He showed them the shields and told them the tale of the girth⁶ and length of the wild swine; and also of his viciousness in the wood where he fled. That other knight full comely commended his deeds, and praised it as a great bag that he had made; for such a brawn of a beast, the bold man said, nor such sides of a swine, saw he never before. Then they handled the huge head; the courteous man praised it and made much of it to honour the lord.

"Now Gawain," quoth the good man, "this game is your own, by fine and fast foreword, truly ye know."

"It is sooth," quoth the hero; "and as truly all my getting I shall give you in turn, by my troth." He took the warrior about the neck and courteously kissed him, and another time he served him the same.

"Now we are even," quoth the warrior, "tonight of all the covenants that we knit by law since I came hither."

Said the lord, "By St. Giles, ye are the best that I know! Ye will be rich in a short time, if ye drive such chaffer!"

21. Then they raised tables aloft on trestles, and cast cloths upon them. The clear light then appeared along the walls, as men set and distributed waxen torches all about the hall. Much mirth and glee rose up therein, about the fire on the hearth, and in various wise at the supper and after. Many noble songs they sang, as Christmas carols and new dance tunes, with all the mannerly mirth that a man can tell of. And ever our lovely knight sat beside the lady. Such seemly cheer she made to the hero, sought with such sly stolen⁷ glances to please the stalwart one, that the wight was all amazed, and wroth with himself. But he would not on account of his breeding reprove her, but responded in all courtesy, howsoever outrageous she might be. When they had played in the hall as long as their will lasted, the lord called to bedwards, and to the room with a fireplace they passed.

22. And there they drank and talked, and the lord proposed again to make the same arrangement for New Year's Eve. But the knight craved leave to depart on the morn, for it was nigh at the term that he must keep. The lord hindered him from that, persuaded him to linger, and said, "As I am true man, I pledge my troth thou shalt reach the green chapel to do thy tasks, sir, by New Year's light, long before prime. Therefore lie in thy loft and take thine ease; and I shall hunt in this holt and keep the covenant—change merchandise with thee when I return hither; for I have tried thee twice, and faithful I find thee; now, 'third time, best time.'⁸ Think on the morrow. Make we merry while we may, and be joyful; for a man can catch trouble whensoever he likes."

This was readily granted and Gawain stayed. Drink was quickly brought to them, and to bed they went with lights. Sir Gawain lay and slept full still and soft all night; the lord, mindful of his hunting, was dight full early.

¹ Present and past tense are oddly mixed in this stanza, as often in the poem. This time they have been normalized.

² The horn-blowing for the game's death.

³ cut up. ⁴ outlets.

⁵ Two words not clear.

⁶ Translating *largesse* as "largeness."

⁷ A guess for *stollen*.

⁸ The line is not clear; literally, perhaps, "third time, throw best."

23. After mass he and his men took a morsel. Merry was the morning. He asks for his mount, and all the sportsmen who should accompany him on horse were ready mounted on their steeds before the hall gates. Wondrous fair was the field, for the frost still lingered. The sun rose in a rack of ruddy red, and drove all the clouds from the welkin. The hunters uncoupled by a holt side, and the hocks in the forest rang for the noise of their horns. Some dogs fell on a scent where the fox had loitered; followed it oft obliquely¹ through the cunning of their wiles. A kennet² cried upon it; the huntsman encouraged him, and his fellows hastened after, panting thickly. They ran forth in a rabble on Reynard's very track, and he hurried before them. Soon they found him; and when they actually saw him they chased him fast, baying him full fiercely with a huge noise. And he trants³ and turns through many a rough grove; doubles and hearkens by hedges full often. At the last by a little ditch he leaps over a spinny, and steals out full stilly by a rough rand.⁴ Half escaped from the wood he turns with wiles from the hounds; but then he arrived, ere he knew it, at a chosen stand, where in an instant three stout hunters in gray threatened him at once. He blenched again quickly, and bravely started off; with all the woe in the world, he turned away to the wood.

24. Then was it a pure joy to listen to the hounds, when all the gathered mute⁵ got view of him. The cry they set on his head at the sight was as if all the resounding cliffs had clattered down in a heap. Here he was halloed when the hunters met him, loudly cried upon with noisy calls; there he was threatened and often called thief; and ever the ticklers were at his tail so that he could not tarry. Oft he was run at when he raked out, and oft he reeled in again, so wily was Reynard. And ever he led the bespattered lord and his troop in this manner among the hills, now in them, now over, now under, while the courteous knight at home slept wholesomely within the comely curtains on the cold morn.

But the lady for love cared not to sleep nor to give up the purpose that bode in her heart; but up she rose quickly and took her

way thither in a gay mantle meetly reaching to the earth, and furred full fine with skins of the best. No ornaments of gold on her head; but only the bright stones set about her tressour⁶ in clusters of twenty. With her fair face and her lovely throat all naked, her breast bare before and behind too, she comes within the chamber door and closes it after her, throws up a window and calls on the wight, and smartly thus stirred him with her fair cheery words. "Ah man, how can you sleep, this morning is so clear!" Though he was drowsing deep, yet could he hear her.

25. In the dreary depths of a dream the noble was sunk, like a man suffering from many sad thoughts, how destiny should *dight him*⁷ his weird at the green chapel that day when he met the man, and had to abide his buffet without more debate. But when he had fairly recovered his wits, he emerged from his dreams and answered with haste. The lovely lady came laughing sweetly, stooped over his fair face and courteously kissed him. He welcomed her worthily with choice cheer. To see her so glorious, and so gaily attired, so faultless of feature, and so lovely of colour, warmed his heart with welling joy. With smooth and gracious smiling they straightway waxed mirthful. All was bliss and good cheer that passed between them. They exchanged goodly words; much happiness they felt, and great was the peril between them, unless Mary thought of her knight.

26. For that beauteous princess constrained him so sorely, and the danger pressed him so nigh, that of necessity it behooved him either accept her love or rudely refuse it. He thought much of his courtesy, lest he should prove a clown; and more on his villainy if he should do sin, and be traitor to the hero who owned the castle. "God shield!" quoth the warrior, "that shall not befall!" With a little love-dalliance he laid aside all the pointed speeches that sprang from her mouth.

Quoth the lady to the hero: "Ye deserve blame if ye love not her who is so near you,—of all creatures in the world most wounded in heart;—unless indeed ye have a sweetheart, a dearer being, that pleases you better, and ye have plighted faith so

¹ Word obscure.

² small hound.

³ twists.

⁴ Unploughed strip by woodsides.

⁵ pack.

⁶ headdress, caul.

⁷ Words in italics supplied by Morris.

firmly to that gentle one that ye care not to loosen it. — Verily now that is what I believe, and I pray you that you tell me truly; for all the loves in the world deny not the truth with guile."

"By St. John!" said the knight, and courteously he smiled, "I have none, and none will I have."

27. "That is the worst of all!" quoth the lady. "I am answered indeed, to my sorrow. Kiss me now comely and I shall go hence. I can only mourn in the world as a maid that loved much."

Sighing she stooped down and kissed him seemly; and then she severed from him, and said as she stood, "Now, dear, at this departing do me this comfort; give me somewhat of thy gift, thy glove if it might be, that I may think on thee, sir, to lessen my mourning."

"Now in truth," quoth that man, "I would I had here for thy love, the dearest thing that I wield; for truly ye have right oft in reason deserved a greater reward than I could reckon. But to exchange with you love-tokens, that would profit but little. It is not for your honor to have at this time a glove of Gawain's gift for a keepsake; and I am here on an errand in lands uncouth, and have no men with mails full of precious things for remembrances at this moment; and that mislikes me, lady. But every man must act according to his circumstances, and none should take it ill or repine."

"Now, courteous and honourable one," quoth that lovesome lady, "though I shall have nothing of yours, yet shall ye have of mine."

28. She reached him a rich ring of red gold work with a gleaming stone standing aloft, that shed blushing beams like the bright sun; know ye well it was worth wealth full huge. But the man refused it, and readily he said: "I desire no great gifts, my gay one, at this time. I have naught to give you, and naught will I take."

She offered it him full pressingly, and he refused her offer, and swore swiftly on his sooth that he would not take it. And she sorrowed that he refused, and said thereafter, "If ye refuse my ring, since it seems too rich, and ye would not be so highly beholden to me, I shall give you my girdle, that will enrich you less."

She lightly caught a lace that went about her sides, knit upon her kirtle under the bright mantle. It was adorned with green silk, and ornamented with gold, brodered all around, decked with fringes;¹ and that she offered to the hero, and gaily besought that, though it were unworthy, he would take it. And he denied that he would in any wise take either gold or present ere God sent him grace to achieve the chance that he had chosen there. "And therefore, I pray you, be not displeased, and give over your attempt; for I intend never to consent. I am dearly beholden to you because of your entertainment; and ever in hot and in cold I will be your true servant."

29. "Now refuse ye this silk," said the lady then, "because it is simple in itself, as it certainly seems to be? Lo! little it is, and less it is worth; but whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein, he would esteem it at a greater price peradventure; for whatsoever man is girt with this green lace, while he has it fittingly wrapped about him, there is no warrior under heaven than can wound him; for he could not be slain by any device in the world."

Then the knight paused, and it came to his heart that it would be a jewel for the peril that awaited him when he arrived at the chapel to undergo his ordeal. Could he manage to be unslain, that were a noble device. Then he indulged her entreaties and suffered her to speak; and she pressed the belt on him and offered it to him eagerly. And he accepted it, and she gave it him with a good will, and besought him for her sake never to discover it, but to conceal it loyally from her lord. The man agreed that never person should know it indeed but they twain. Full oft he thanked her, right glad in heart and thought. By that she had kissed the stout knight three times.

30. Then she takes her leave and leaves him there, for more entertainment she could not get from that man. When she was gone Sir Gawain bestirs himself, rises and dresses in noble array. He lays up the love-lace the lady had given him, hides it full cleverly where he can find it again. Then promptly he takes his way to the chapel; quietly approaches to the priest and prays him there

¹ Reading *fringes* for MS. *fyngres*; or we may keep the text and translate, "wrought, embroidered, by fingers."

that he would elevate his life, and teach him better how his soul should be saved when he should go hence. Then he shrives him cleanly and shows his misdeeds, both the more and the less, beseeches mercy, and begs for absolution. And the priest assails him thoroughly and set him as clean as if doomsday had been due on the morrow. And afterwards Gawain makes more mirth among the fair ladies that day with comely carols and all kinds of joy than ever he did before, till the dark night. Everyone had pleasure of him there, and said indeed that he had never been so merry since he came hither.

31. Now let him linger in that place, where may love betide him. The lord is still in the field leading his men. He has overtaken this fox that he followed so long, as he sprinted over a spinny to spy the rascal, where he heard the bounds that hastened fast after him. Reynard came running through a rough grove, and all the rabble in a rout right at his heels. The man was ware of the game, and warily abode; pulled out his bright brand and struck at the beast; and he dodged from the sharp weapon and would have turned; but a dog seized him ere he could, and right before the horse's feet they all fell on him and worried this wily one with a great noise. The lord lighted quickly, and caught him forthwith; pulled him full hastily out of the dogs' mouths, and holding him high over his head, halloed fast; and there many fierce hounds bayed him. Hunters hied them thither with horns full many, ever blowing the recheat¹ till they saw the hero. As soon as his noble company was come, all that bare bugle blew at once, and all the others that had no horns halloed. It was the merriest mute² that ever men heard — the rich riot that there was raised for Reynard's soul. They rewarded the bounds there, stroked them and rubbed their heads; and afterwards they took Reynard and turned off his coat.

32. And then they hastened home, for it was night, blowing full stoutly in their great horns. The lord alighted at last at his dear home, found fire on the floor, and the hero beside it, Sir Gawain the good, that glad was withal among the ladies; in

their love he had much joy. He wore a mantle of blue that reached to the earth; his surcoat, that was softly furred, became him well; and his hood of the same hung on his shoulder. Trimmed all about with fine fur were both. He met this good man in the middle of the floor, and all joyfully he greeted him, and goodly he said: "Now I shall fulfill our covenant, that we have just made, where no drink was spared." Then he embraces the knight and kisses him thrice with as much gusto and as soberly as he could give them.

"By Christ!" quoth the other knight, "ye get much bliss in the profits of this business — if ye drive good bargains!"

"Of the bargain, no matter," quoth curtly that other, "so long as the debts that I owed are properly paid."

"Mary!" quoth the other man, "my offering is the worse, for I have hunted all this day, and naught have I got but this foul fox-fell; the fiend have the good ones! And that is full poor to pay for such fine things as ye have given me here, three such rare kisses."

"It is enough," quoth Sir Gawain; "I thank you, by the rood." And as they stood there the lord told him how the fox was slain.

33. With mirth and minstrelsy, with meats at their will, they made as merry as any men could. With laughing of ladies, with merry jests, Gawain and the good man were both as glad as if the court were mad, or else drunk. Both the man and his retinue made many jokes till the season arrived when they must sever; the men had to go to their beds at last. Then humbly this gentle man takes his leave of the lord first; and fairly he thanks him. "For such a joyous sojourn as I have had here, for the honor you have shown me at this high feast, the high king reward you! I can only give you myself to be one of your men, if that pleases you. For I must needs, as ye know, proceed, tomorrow, if ye will grant me some man to show, as you promised, the way to the green chapel, as God will suffer me to take on New Year's day the doom of my fate."

"In good faith," quoth the good man, "with a good will! All that ever I promised you, I will perform." Therewith he assigns a servant to set him in the way, and

¹ The note that recalls all the dogs.

² Noise of the whole band.

conduct him by the downs, that he should without hesitation travel through the forest and fare at the best in the woods. The lord thanked Gawain for the worship he had been willing to show him. Then the knight took his leave of the beautiful ladies.

34. With care and with kissing he speaks to them, and many earnest thanks he presses upon them. And they returned him the same again promptly; they entrusted him to Christ with sighings full sad. Afterwards he graciously departs from the household; each man that he met he thanked him for his service and his solace, and the various pains with which they had been busy to serve him. And each man was as sad to sever from him there as if they had ever dwelt worthily with that hero. Then with people and with light he was led to his chamber and blithely brought to bed to be at his rest. Whether he slept soundly I dare not say, for he had much to think of on the morrow if he would. Let him lie there; he was near what he sought. If ye will be still a while I shall tell you how they fared.

FYTTE THE FOURTH

1. Now nighs the New Year, and the night passes. The day drives on to the dark, as God bids; but outside wild storms wakened in the world; clouds cast the cold keenly to the earth; with discomfort enough to the naked, the snow from the north flew sharply, and nipped the game. The blustering wind blew from the heights, and drove each dale full of great drifts. The man who lay in his bed heard it right well; though he locks his lids, full little he sleeps. By each cock that crew he knew well the hour. Promptly he leaped up ere the day sprang, for there was the light of a lamp that gleamed in his chamber. He called to his chamberlain, who quickly answered him, and bade him bring his burnie and saddle his horse. The chamberlain gets up and fetches him his weeds, and arrays Sir Gawain in proper fashion. First he dressed him in his clothes to keep out the cold, and then he put on the rest of his harness, that had been well kept, both mail and plate, and brightly polished. The rings of his rich burnie had been rocked from the rust,¹ and all was fresh as at first; and Gawain was

¹ That is, in a barrel of sand.

fain to give thanks for it. The attendant had wiped each piece well and often. Then the noblest man betwixt here and Greece bade his steed be brought.

2. Meanwhile, he threw upon himself his finest weeds; his surcoat with its cognisance of excellent work, virtuous stones set upon velvet, all wrought about and bound with embroidered seams, and fairly furred within with rare skins. Yet left he not the lace, the lady's gift,—that forgot not Gawain for his own good. When he had belted his brand upon his broad haunches, he dressed his love-token double about him, the knight swathed sweetly about his waist the girdle of green silk, which became him well, upon the royal red cloth that was fair to see. But this hero wore not the girdle for its wealth, for pride of the pendants, though they were polished, and though the glittering gold gleamed on the ends; but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer, to await his doom without resistance, with no brand or knife to defend him. By this the good man is ready and goes out quickly. Full often he thanks the distinguished company.

3. Gringolet the huge and strong was ready, who had been kept skilfully in the safest manner. The proud horse in his splendid condition longed for spurring. The hero approached him, noticed his coat, and said soberly, and by his sooth swore—"Here, in this castle, is a company that are mindful of courtesies. The man who maintains them, joy may he have; the dear lady, love betide her in this life, since they for charity cherish a guest and uphold honor in their hand. May the Being reward them who holds the heaven on high—and also you all. And if I might live any longer in the world I should give you some reward if I could." Then he stepped into stirrup and strode aloft. His servant offered him his shield; he put it on his shoulder. He spurred Gringolet with his gilt heels, and the steed jumped on the stone; no longer he stood still, but pranced. Gawain's servant, who bore his lance and helm, was by then on the horse. "This castle I entrust to Christ; may he give it aye good chance!"

4. The bridge was let down, and the broad gates unbarred and borne open on both sides. The hero crossed himself quickly and passed the boards, praised the porter, who

knelt before him giving good day and praying God that he save Gawain. And so he went on his way with his one man that should teach him how to find that dismal place where he should receive the rueful blow. They rode by banks where boughs are bare; they climbed by cliffs where the cold clings; the sky was upheld, but it was ugly beneath; mist hung on the moor and melted on the mount; each hill had a hat, a huge mist-cloak. Brooks boiled and broke from the banks about, shattering sheer on their shores where they showered down. Dreary was the way, where they should travel by the wood, till soon came the season when the sun rises at that time. They were on a hill full high, the white snow about them, when the man that rode beside him bade his master abide.

5. "I have brought you hither, sir, at this time; and now ye are not far from that famous spot that ye have asked and inquired so specially after. But I shall say to you forsooth, since I know you, and ye are a man that I love well, if ye would work by my wit ye should be the better for it. The place that ye press to is held full perilous. There dwells in that waste a wight the worst upon earth; for he is stiff and stern and loves to strike; and greater he is than any man in the world, and his body bigger than the four best that are in Arthur's house, and bigger than Hector or any other. He maintains that adventure at the green chapel. There passes by that place none so proud in arms but he dints him to death with dint of his hand. For he is a man without measure and uses no mercy; for be it churl or chaplain that rides by the chapel, monk or mass-priest, or any man else, he likes as well to kill him as to go alive himself. Therefore I tell ye as truly as ye sit in the saddle, come ye there ye shall be killed—trust me well—though ye had twenty lives to spend. He has dwelt here full long and caused much strife in the land. Against his sore dints ye cannot defend yourself.

6. "Therefore, good Sir Gawain, let the fellow alone, and go away some other road, for God's sake. Repair to some other country, where Christ may speed you; and I shall bid me home again, and promise you further—which I will swear by God and all his good saints, so help me God and the

halidom and oaths enough—that I will loyally conceal you, and never tell tale that ever ye fled for any man that I know of."

"Gramercy," quoth Gawain. And sternly he added. "Well worth thee, man, who wishes my good; and I well believe thou wouldst loyally conceal me. But if thou kept promise never so faithfully, and I gave up here, sought for fear to fly as you advise, I were a knight coward; I could not be excused. But I will go to the chapel whatever chance may fall, and talk with that same man the tale that I like, be it good or evil, as it pleases fate to have it. Though he be a stern champion to cope with, and armed with a club, full well can God manage to save his servants."

7. "Mary!" quoth that other man, "now thou sayest as much as that thou wilt take upon thyself thine own destruction; if it pleases thee to lose thy life, I shall not let nor hinder thee. Have here thy helm on thy head, thy spear in thy hand; and ride down this same lane by yon rock-side till thou be brought to the bottom of the rugged valley; then look a little up the grassy slope on thy left hand, and thou shalt see in that ravine the chapel itself, and the burly man on the field who keeps it. Now farewell in God's name, Gawain the noble, for all the gold in the world I would not go with thee nor bear thee fellowship through this wood a foot further."

At that the man turned his bridle in the wood, hit the horse with the heels as hard as he could; leaped over the land, and left the knight there all alone.

"By God's self," quoth Gawain, "I will neither grieve nor groan. To God's will I am full obedient, and to him I have entrusted myself."

8. Then he spurs Gringolet and follows the path; pushes in by a hollow beside a thicket; rides through the rough slope right to the dale; and then he looked about him, and wild it seemed to him. He saw no sign of dwelling anywhere around, but on both sides high steep banks, and rough hunched crags with projecting stones; the shadows of the cliffs seemed to him terrible. Then he paused and held back his horse, and oft changed his cheer while seeking the chapel. He saw none such on any side, and strange it seemed to him. But soon, a little distance off on a grassy spot he descried a

mound as it were, a smooth hill by the bank of the stream near a ford of the flood that ran there. The burn bubbled there as if it were boiling. The knight urges his steed, and comes to the hill; lights nimbly down, and ties the rein and his rich bridle to a tree by a rough branch; then he turns to the hill and walks about it, debating with himself what it might be. It had a hole at the end and on either side, and was overgrown with grass in clumps everywhere, and was all hollow within—nothing but an old cave or a crevice of an old crag. He could not understand it at all. "Alas, Lord," quoth the gentle knight, "can this be the green chapel? Here about midnight the devil might tell his matins."

9. "Now," quoth Gawain, "it certainly is mysterious here; this oratory is ugly, overgrown with herbs. Well it beseems the wight clad in green here to do his devotions in the devil's wise. Now I feel in my five wits it is the fiend that has made this bargain with me, to destroy me here. This is a chapel of mischance; may ill fortune betide it! It is the cursedest kirk that ever I came in!"

With high helm on his head, his lance in his hand, he strides up to the rock of the rude dwelling. Then he heard from that high hill, in a rough cave, on a bank beyond the brook, a marvellously savage noise. Lo, the cliff clattered as though it would split, as if one were grinding a scythe on a grindstone. It whirled and screeched like water at a mill; it rushed and rang that it was ruth to hear.

"By God," quoth Gawain then, "that gear, I fancy, is being prepared to give me a good reception. Yet though I must lose my life, fear shall never make me change colour."

10. Then the knight called full high: "Who dwells in this place to keep covenant with me? For now the good Gawain is passing right here. If any wight wishes ought, let him come hither fast, now or never, to fulfill his need!"

"Abide!" quoth one on the bank over his head. "Thou shalt have in all haste that which I promised thee once."

Yet he kept on with that noise sharply for a while, turning and whetting, ere he would come down. And then he crossed by a crag and came from a hole, whirling out of a

dark place with a fell weapon—a Danish axe new dight, to give the blow with. It had fast to the helve a great head, sharpened on the stone. Four feet long was the weapon—no less, by that lace that gleamed full bright. And the man in the green was arrayed as before—both his skin and his limbs, locks, and beard; save that on foot he strides fairly on the earth. He set the steel shaft to the stone and stalked beside it. When he came to the water, where he did not wish to wade, he hopped over on his axe, and fiercely advanced, with savage ferocity pacing the broad snow-covered glade. Sir Gawain met the knight and bowed to him, not at all low. The other said, "Now, sweet sir, in a covenant a man can trust thee."

11. "Gawain," quoth the green warrior, "may God preserve thee. Indeed thou art welcome, hero, to my place; and thou hast timed thy travel as a true man should. And thou knowest the covenants made between us; at this time twelve month, thou tookest what fell to thee,—and I at this New Year was to repay you handsomely. And now we are in this valley entirely alone; here are no men to part us, however we may behave. Have thy helm off thy head, and have here thy pay. Make no more debate than I offered thee then, when thou whipped off my head at one blow."

"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God that lent me life, I shall grudge thee not a whit whatever misfortune falls. But arrange thee for thy one stroke, and I shall stand still and hinder thee not the least from doing the work as you like."

He bent the neck and bowed down, showing the flesh all bare; and behaved as if he cared not. For no dread would he flinch.

12. Then the man in the green got ready quickly, gathered up his grim tool to smite Gawain. With all the might in his body he bare it aloft, and aimed a savage blow as though he wished to kill him. Had it driven down as earnestly as he feinted, the ever doughty one would have been dead of his dint. But Gawain glanced to one side on the gisarm as it came gliding down to slay him there in the glade, and shrank a little with the shoulders from the sharp iron. The other warrior with a quick motion withheld the bright weapon, and then he reproved the prince with many proud words.

"Thou art not Gawain," said the man, "who is held so good, who never flinched for any army by hill nor by vale; and now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest any harm. Such cowardice I never heard of that knight. I neither winced nor fled, sir, when thou didst strike, nor tried any tricks in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my foot, and yet I never budged; and thou, ere any harm taken, art fearful in heart. Wherefore the better man I ought to be called for it."

"I flinched once," quoth Gawain, "and will do so no more. Yet if my head should fall on the stones, I cannot restore it."

13. "But make ready, sir, by thy faith, and bring me to the point. Deal to me my destiny, and do it promptly; for I shall stand thee a stroke, and not start again till thine axe has hit me — have here my troth."

"Have at thee then!" quoth the other, and heaves it aloft, and aims as savagely as if he were mad. He strikes at him mightily, but touches the man not; for he withheld his hand cleverly ere it could hurt. Gawain awaits it properly and flinches with no member, but stands still as a stone, or a stump that is twisted into the rocky ground with a hundred roots.

Then merrily spoke the man in the green: "So, now thou hast thy heart whole it behoves me to hit. Now keep back the fine hood that Arthur gave thee, and see if thou canst keep thy neck whole from this stroke."

Said Gawain in great anger: "Why, thrash on, thou wild man! Thou threatenest too long. I guess that thine own heart is timid!"

"Forsooth," quoth the other warrior, "thou speakest so fiercely that I will not delay thine errand a bit longer." Then he takes his stride to strike and knits both brow and lip. No wonder Gawain dislikes it and gives up all thought of escape.

14. Lightly he lifts his axe and lets the edge come down fairly on the bare neck. Yet though he smote rudely, it hurt him but little; only cut him on one side so that it severed the skin. The sharp bit reached the flesh through the fair fat, so that the bright blood shot over his shoulders to the earth. And when the hero saw the blood glint on the snow, he leaped forth more than a spear's length, eagerly seized his helm, cast it on his head, threw his shoulders under his fair shield, pulled out a bright sword

and fiercely spoke. Never in this world since he was born of his mother was he half so blithe.

"Cease, sir, of thy blow! Offer me no more. I have without strife taken a stroke in this place; and if thou givest me more, I shall promptly repay and yield quickly again, trust thou that! Only one stroke falls to me here. The covenant which we made in Arthur's halls provided just that; and therefore, courteous sir, now hold!"

15. The warrior turned from him and rested on his axe. He set the shaft on the ground, leaned on the head, and beheld how the doughty hero stood his ground grimly, fully armed and devoid of fear. In his heart it pleased him. Then with a great voice, and a huge laugh, he spoke merrily to the hero: "Bold sir, in this place be not so savage. Nobody has here unmannerly mishandled thee, nor done but according to covenant made at the king's court. I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it; hold thee well paid. I release thee of the remnant, of all other rights. If I had been skilful peradventure I could have given you a worse buffet. First I menaced you merrily with a pure feint, and gave thee no blow; which was but justice, considering the covenant which we made on the first night, and which thou held with me trustily; for truly all the gain thou gave me as a good man should. The second feint this morning, sir, I proffered thee, because thou didst kiss my fair wife and didst hand the kisses over to me; for these two occasions I gave thee here but two bare feints without harm. A true man truly restores; such an one need dread no harm. At the third time thou didst fail; and so take thee that tap."

16. "For it is my weed that thou weardest, that same woven girdle. Mine own wife gave it thee, I know well, forsooth. Now know I well thy kisses, and thy virtues also. And as for the wooing of my wife, I managed it myself. I sent her to try thee, and truly it seems to me thou art the most faultless hero that ever went on foot. As a pearl is of greater price than white peas, so is Gawain, in good faith, compared with other gay knights. But in this case, sir, you lacked a little, and loyalty failed you. But that was for no amorous work, nor wooing either, but because ye loved your life, — the less I blame you."

"That other brave man stood a great while in a study; so stricken was he for grief that he groaned within. All the blood of his breast rushed to his face; and he shrank for shame when the warrior talked. This was the first word that the man spoke — "Cursed be cowardice and covetousness both! In you is villainy and vice, that destroy virtue." Then he caught at the knot and loosed the fastening; fiercely reached the belt to the warrior himself. "Lo! there is the deception, foul may it fall! For fear of thy knock cowardice taught me to make a truce with covetousness, to forsake my nature, which is generosity and loyalty, that belong to knights. Now am I faulty and false, and a coward have ever been. From treachery and untruth ever come sorrow and care. Here I confess to you, knight, that my conduct is all faulty. Let me but please you now, and after I shall beware."

17. Then the other laughed and said courteously: "I hold it quite remedied, the harm that I had. Thou hast made a clean confession, acknowledging all thy misdeeds, and hast received the penance openly from the point of my edge. I hold thee quit of that plight, and purified as clean as if thou hadst never forfeited since thou was first born. And I give thee, sir, the girdle that is gold hemmed. Since it is green, as is my gown, Sir Gawain, ye may think upon this same adventure where thou goest forth among great princes; and this shall be a genuine token among chivalrous knights of the adventure of the green chapel, and ye shall come again this New Year to my dwelling, and we shall revel the remnant of this rich feast full well." The lord pressed the invitation and said, "With my wife, who was your great enemy, I think we shall reconcile you."

18. "Nay, forsooth," quoth the hero; and seizing his helm, he took it off quickly and thanked the warrior. "I have had a good visit, bliss betide you; and may He pay you well who directs all mercies. Commend me to that courteous one, your comely mate; both the one and the other, my honoured ladies, who have thus with their craft quaintly beguiled their knight. But it is no wonder that a fool should rave, and through wiles of women be won to sorrow. For so was Adam beguiled by one, and Solomon by many, indeed; and Samson also,

Delilah dealt him his weird; and David thereafter was deceived by Bethsheba, who suffered much sorrow. Since these men were plagued by their wives, it were a huge gain to love them well and believe them not — if a person but could; for these men were of old the best, and the most fortunate, excellent above all others under the heavens; and all they were beguiled by women whom they had to do with.¹ If I be now deceived, meseems I might be excused.

19. "But your girdle," quoth Gawain, "God reward you for it! That will I keep with good will; not for the precious gold, nor the samite nor the silk, nor the wide pendants, for its wealth nor for its beauty nor for its fine work; but in sign of my fault I shall behold it oft; when I ride in renown I shall lament to myself the fault and the deceit of the crabbed flesh, how tender it is to catch stains of filth; and thus when pride shall prick me for prowess of arms, a look on this love-lace shall moderate my heart. But one thing I would pray you — may it displease you not — since ye are lord of the land yonder where I have stayed worshipfully with you — may the Being who upholds the heaven and sits on high repay you for it! — how name ye your right name? and then no more."

"That shall I tell thee truly," quoth the other then. "Bernlak de Hautdesert I am called in this land through the might of Morgen la Fay, who dwells in my house. She has acquired deep learning, hard-won skill, many of the masteries of Merlin; — for she has at times dealt in rare magic with that renowned clerk, who knows all your knights at home. Morgan the Goddess is therefore her name; no person is so haughty but she can tame him."

20. "She sent me in this wise to your rich hall to assay its pride and try if it were true that circulates about the great renown of the Round Table. She prepared for me this wonder to take away your wits, to have grieved Guinevere and caused her to die through fright of that same man, that ghostly speaker with his head in his hand before the high table. That is she, the ancient lady at home. She is even thine aunt, Arthur's half-sister, the daughter of

¹ This passage is none too clear.

that Duchess of Tintagel upon whom dear Uther afterwards begot Arthur, that is now king. Therefore, I beg you, sir, to come to thine aunt; make merry in my house; my people love thee, and I like thee as well, sir, by my faith as I do any man under God for thy great truth."

But he answered him nay, he would in no wise. They embraced and kissed, each entrusted other to the Prince of Paradise, and they parted right there in the cold. Gawain on horse full fair rides boldly to the king's court, and the knight all in green whithersoever he would.

21. Wild ways in the world Gawain now rides on Gringolet, he who had got the boon of his life. Oft he harboured in houses, and oft without; and many an adventure in vale he had, and won oft; but that I care not at this time to mention in my tale. The hurt was whole that he had got in his neck; and he bare the glistening belt about him, crossed obliquely like a baldric, the lace fastened under his left arm with a knot, in token that he was taken in a fault. And thus he comes to the court, the knight all sound. There wakened joy in that dwelling when the great ones knew that good Gawain had come; joyous it seemed to them. The king kisses the knight, and the queen also; and afterwards many a sure knight, who sought to embrace him and asked him of his journey. And wondrously he tells it, confessing all the trials that he had, the adventure of the chapel, the behavior of the knight, the love of the lady — and, at the last, the lace. He showed them the nick in his neck

that he caught at the lord's hands for his unloyalty. He grieved when he had to tell it; he groaned for sorrow, and the blood rushed to his face for shame when he declared it.

22. "Lo! lord," quoth the hero, as he handled the lace, "this that I bear in my neck is the badge of this blame. This is the evil and the loss that I have got from the cowardice and covetousness that I showed there. This is the token of untruth that I am taken in, and I must needs wear it while I may last; for none may hide his shame without mishap, for where it once is incurred, depart will it never."

The king and all the court comfort the knight. They laugh loud at his tale, and lovingly agree that the lords and ladies that belong to the Table, each knight of the brotherhood, should have a baldric, an oblique band about him of a bright green, and wear that for the sake of the hero. And that emblem was accorded the renown of the Round Table, and he was ever after honoured that had it.

As it is told in the best book of romance, thus in Arthur's day this adventure betid, which the Brutus books bear witness of. After Brutus the bold hero first came hither, when the siege and the assault had ceased at Troy, many adventures of this sort happened. Now may He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to his bliss. AMEN.

HONY SOIT QUI MAL PENCE.

WILLIAM LANGLAND(?)

THE VISION OF WILLIAM CONCERNING PIERS THE PLOUGHMAN

VERSION A

PROLOGUE

In a summer season, when soft was the sun,
I clad me in rough clothing, a shepherd as I were;
In habit of a hermit, unholy of works,
Went I wide in this world, wonders to hear.
But on a May morning on Malvern Hills
To me befell a marvel, a fairy thing me-thought.
I was weary of wandering and went me to rest
Under a broad bank by a burn side;
And as I lay and leaned and looked on the waters,
I slumbered in a sleep, it sounded so pleasant.
Then did I dream a marvellous dream,
That I was in a wilderness, wist I not where;
And as I beheld into the east, on high to the sun,
I saw a tower on a hill-top, splendidly fashioned;
A deep dale beneath, a dungeon therein,
With a deep ditch and dark, and dreadful to see.
A fair field full of folk found I there between,
Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,
Working and wandering, as the world requireth.
Some put them to the plow, and played full seldom,
In plowing and sowing produced they full hardly.
What many of these wasters in gluttony destroy.
And some gave themselves to pride, appeared them accordingly,

In fashion of clothing strangely disguised.
To prayer and to penance put themselves many,
For love of our Lord lived they full hard,
In hope to have the bliss of heaven's kingdom,
As anchorites and hermits that hold themselves in cells,
Covet not in the country to gad all about,
With luxurious living their body to please.
And some chose trade, to prosper the better,
As it seems to our sight that such men should;
And some mirth to make, as minstrels can,
And get gold with their glee, guiltless, I trow.
But jesters and buffoons, Judas's children,
Found for themselves fantasies and of themselves fools made,
Yet have their wits at command, to work if they will.
What Paul preached of them I dare not prove here;
Qui loquitur turpiliquium,¹ he is Lucifer's servant.
Askers and beggars fast about flitted,⁴⁰
Till their bags and their bellies brimful were crammed;
Feigned for their food, fought at the ale-house;
In gluttony, God wot, go they to bed
And rise up with ribaldry, these bullying beggar-knaves;
Sleep and sloth follow them ever.
Pilgrims and palmers pledge themselves together
To seek the shrine of St. James and saints at Rome;
Went forth in their way with many wise tales,
And had leave to lie all their life after.
Hermits in a band with hooked staves⁵⁰
Went to Walsingham, and their wenches after.

¹ He who speaketh baseness.

Great lubbers and long, that loath were
to work,
Clothed themselves in capes to be known
for brethren,
And some dressed as hermits their ease to
have.
I found there friars, all the four orders,
Preaching to the people for profit of their
bellies,
Interpreting the gospel as they well please,
For covetousness of capes construes it ill;
For many of these masters may clothe
themselves at will,
For money and their merchandise meet oft
together.⁶⁰
Since Charity hath turned trader, and
shriven chiefly lords,
Many wonders have befallen in these few
years.
Unless Holy Church now be better held
together
The most mischief on earth will mount up
fast.

There preached a pardoner, as he a priest
were,
And brought up a bull with bishop's seals,
And said he himself would absolve them all
From breach of fasting and broken vows.
The laymen liked him well, believed his
speech,
And came up kneeling and kissed his
bull;⁷⁰
He banged them with his brevet,¹ and
bleared their eyes,
And purchased with his parchment rings
and brooches.
Thus ye give your gold gluttony to help,
And grant it to rascals that run after
lechery.
Were the bishop holy and worth both his
ears,
They should not be so brazen to deceive so
the people.
Yet it is not against the bishop that the
knave preacheth;
But the parish priest and pardoner share
the silver
That the poor parishioners should have but
for them.
Parsons and parish priests complain to
their bishops⁸⁰
That their parish hath been poor since the
pestilence² time,

And ask leave and licence at London to
dwell
To sing there for simony,⁸ for silver is
sweet.

There hang about a hundred in hoods of
silk,
Sergeants, it seems, to serve at the bar;
Plead at the law for pence and for pounds,
Not for love of our Lord unloose their lips
once.
Thou mightest better measure the mist on
Malvern hills
Than get a mum of their mouth till money
be shown.

I saw there bishops bold and bachelors
of divinity⁹⁰
Become clerks of account, the king to
serve;
Archdeacons and deacons, that dignity
have
To preach to the people and poor men to
feed,
Have leapt to London, by leave of their
bishops,
To be clerks of the King's Bench, to the
country's hurt.

Barons and burgesses, and husbandmen
also,
I saw in that assembly, as ye shall hear
hereafter.

Bakers, butchers, and brewers many,
Woollen weavers, and weavers of linen,
Tailors, tanners, and fullers also,¹⁰⁰
Masons, miners, and many other crafts,
Ditchers and delvers, that do their work ill,
And drive forth the long day with "Dieu
vous sauve, dame Emma."⁴

Cooks and their boys cry "Hot pies, hot!
Good geese and pigs, go dine, go dine!"
Taverners to them told the same tale
With good wine of Gascony and wine of
Alsace,
Of Rhine and of Rochelle, the roast to di-
gest.
All this I saw sleeping, and seven times
more.

PASSUS I

What this mountain meaneth, and this dark
dale,
And this fair field full of folk, fairly I
shall you show.

⁸ Getting money singing anniversary masses for the
dead.

⁴ "God save you, dame Emma"—apparently a popu-
lar song.

¹ Letter of indulgence.

² Probably the great plague of 1348-1349.

A lady lovely in face, in linen clothed,
 Came down from the cliff, and called me
 gently,
 And said, "Son, sleepest thou? Seest thou
 these people
 All how busy they be about vanity?
 The most part of the people that pass now
 on earth,
 If they have honour in this world, they care
 for nothing better;
 Of other heaven than here they have no
 regard."
 I was afraid of her face, though she fair
 were,
 And said, "Pardon, madame, what does this
 mean?"
 "This tower and this hill," quoth she,
 "Truth is therein,
 And would that ye wrought as his word
 teacheth,
 For he is Father of faith, that formed you all
 Both with skin and with face, and gave you
 five senses
 For to worship him therewith, while ye be
 here,
 And because he commanded the earth to
 serve you each one
 With woollen, with linen, with livelihood at
 need,
 In moderate manner, to put you at ease,
 And commanded of his courtesy in common
 three things,
 Their names are needful and to name them
 I propose
 By rule and by reason, to rehearse them as
 follows:
 The one clothing is, from chill you to
 save,
 And the second meat at meals, against dis-
 comfort of thyself;
 And drink when thou art dry, but do it not
 out of reason
 So that thou be the worse when thou work
 shouldest.
 Dread delightful drink, and thou shalt do
 the better:
 Moderation is medicine, though you crave
 much.
 All is not good for the soul that pleaseth
 the body,
 Nor all food to the body that is dear to the
 soul.
 Believe not thy body, for a liar him teach-
 eth

(That is, the wicked world) thee to be-
 tray.
 For the fiend and thy flesh follow together
 And injure thy soul — set it in thy heart;
 And that thou shouldest beware, I teach
 thee the better."
 "Ah, madame, *merci*," quoth I, "thy
 words please me well.
 But the money on this earth, that men so
 fast hold,
 Tell me to whom that treasure belongeth."
 "Go to the Gospel," quoth she, "that
 God speaks himself,
 When the people asked him about a penny
 in the temple,
 If they should honor therewith Caesar their
 king.
 And he asked of them of whom spake the
 lettering,
 And whom the image was like that thereon
 stood.
 'Caesar,' they said, 'we see well, each one.'
*Reddite ergo quae sunt Caesaris Caesari et
 quae sunt Dei Deo.*¹
 'Then render,' quoth Christ, 'what to Cae-
 sar belongeth,
 And what is God's to God, or else ye do
 ill.'
 For Right Reason should rule you all,
 And Common Sense be warden, our wealth
 to guard,
 And tower of our treasure to give it you at
 need;
 For husbandry and he hold well together."
 Then I asked her fairly, for [the sake of]
 him that made her,
 "That dungeon in that deep vale, that
 dreadful is to see,
 What may it mean, madame, I thee be-
 seech,"
 "That is the Castle of Care," quoth she;
 "whoso cometh therein
 May curse that he was born to body or to
 soul.
 Therein dwelleth a wight that Wrong is
 called,
 Father of falseness, — he founded it him-
 self.
 Adam and Eve he egged on to do ill;
 Counsellor Cain to kill his brother;
 Judas he cheated with the Jews' silver,
 And on an elder tree hanged him after.
 He is a hinderer of love, and lieth to all
 those

¹ Matthew, xxii, 20.

That trust in their treasure, wherein is no truth.”
 Then had I wonder in my wits what woman it might be
 That such wise words of Holy Writ me showed; 70
 And I greeted her in the High Name, ere she thence went,
 What she might be indeed that taught me so fairly.
 “Holy Church I am,” quoth she, “thou oughtest to know me,
 I received thee first, and thy faith taught thee.
 Thou broughtest me pledges my bidding to do,
 And loyally to love me, while thy life lasted.”
 Then kneeled I on my knees and cried to her for grace,
 And prayed her piteously to pray for our sins,
 And eke to teach me kindly on Christ to believe,
 That I might work the will of Him that made me a man. 80
 “Show me no treasure, but tell me this same:
 How I may save my soul, thou that holy art held.”
 “When all treasure is tested, truth is the best;
 I appeal to ‘God is Love’ to judge the truth.
 It is as precious a jewel as dear God himself.
 For whoso is true of his tongue, and telleth naught else,
 Doth his work with truth, and doth no man ill;
 He is accounted of the Gospel, on earth and above,
 And also likened to our Lord, by Saint Luke’s words.
 Clerks that know it should teach it about, 90
 For Christians and non-Christians, each claims it for himself.
 Kings and knights should conduct themselves reasonably,
 And rightly roam the realms about,
 And take trespassers and tie them fast
 Till truth had determined the trespass to the end.
 For David, in his days, he dubbed knights,
 Made them swear on their sword to serve truth ever,

That is plainly the profession that pertaineth to knights,
 And not to fast one Friday in five score years,
 But to hold with men and women that seek the truth, 100
 And leave off for no love nor grasping of gifts;
 And he that oversteps that point is apostate of the order,
 For Christ, king of kings, knighted ten, Cherubim and Seraphim, seven such and another,¹
 And gave them mastery and might, in his majesty,
 And over his army made them archangels,
 And taught them through the Trinity truth to know,
 And to be obedient to his bidding, he bade them naught else.
 Lucifer with legions learned it in heaven.
 He was loveliest to see, after our Lord, 110
 Till he broke obedience through boast of himself.
 Then fell he with his fellows, and fiends they became,
 Out of heaven into hell hobbled fast,
 Some into the air, and some to the earth, and some into hell deep;
 But Lucifer lieth lowest of them all;
 For pride that he put on, his pain hath no end.
 And all that work wrong, wend they shall, After their death day, and with that devil dwell.
 But they that work that word that Holy Writ teacheth,
 And end, as I said before, in profitable works, 120
 May be sure that their souls shall to heaven,
 Where Truth is in Trinity and crowneth them all.
 For I say certainly, in view of the texts,
 When all treasure is tried, Truth is the best.
 Teach it to the ignorant, for the lettered know it,
 That Truth is a treasure, the finest on earth.”
 “Yet have I no natural knowledge,” quoth I, “thou must teach me better,
 By what power in my body it beginneth, and where.”
 “Thou dotest, dolt,” quoth she, “dull are thy wits.

¹ B C. A reads *an* at the four ordres.

It is a natural knowledge that tells thee in
the heart ¹³⁰
For to love thy lord liefer than thyself;
No deadly sin to do, die though thou
shouldest.
This, I trow, is Truth! Whoso can teach
thee better
See that thou suffer him to say it, and then
teach it further!
For thus teacheth us His Word — work
thou thereafter —
That Love is the liefest thing that our Lord
asketh,
And eke the plant of peace. Preach it to
thy harp
Where thou art merry at thy meat, when
men bid thee sing;
For from the heart's own wisdom springeth
the song.
That belongs to the Father that formed
us all, ¹⁴⁰
He looked on us with love, and let His
Son die
Meekly for our misdeeds, to amend us all.
And yet wished He no woe to them that
wrought Him that pain,
But meekly with mouth mercy He be-
sought,
To have pity on that people that tortured
Him to death.
Here thou mightest see example, in Him-
self alone,
How He was mighty and meek, that mercy
did grant
To them that hanged him high, and his
heart pierced.
Therefore I recommend the rich to have
ruth on the poor,
Though ye be mighty at law, be meek in
your works. ¹⁵⁰
*Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis, reme-
cietur vobis.*¹
For the same measure that ye mete, amiss
or otherwise,
Ye shall be weighed therewith, when ye
wend hence.
For though ye be true of tongue, and hon-
estly win,
And eke as chaste as a child that in church
weepeth,
Unless ye live truly and also love the poor,
And such good as God sent truly share,
Ye have no more merit in mass nor in
hours

¹ *Matthew*, vii, 2.

Than Mawkin of her maidenhood that no
man desireth.
For Janes the gentle bound it in his book,
That faith without works is feeblere than
nothing, ¹⁶⁰
And dead as a doornail unless the deed
follow.
Chastity without charity — know thou in
truth —
Is as useless as a lamp that no light is
in.
Many chaplains are chaste, who charity
have none;
No men than they are harder when they
are advanced; —
Unkind to their kin and to all Christians;
They devour their own alms and demand
ever more.
Such chastity without charity will be
claimed² in hell.
Curates that should keep themselves clean
in their bodies,
They are cumbered with care and cannot
escape it, ¹⁷⁰
So hard are they with avarice clamped to-
gether;
That is no truth of the Trinity, but treach-
ery of hell,
And a teaching of laymen more grudgingly
to give.
For these are words written in the evangel,
*Date et dabitur vobis;*³ for I deal to you
all
Your grace and your good hap, your wealth
to win,
And therewith acknowledge me naturally
for what I send you.
This is the lock of Love that letteth out my
grace
To comfort the careworn, cumbered with
sin.
Love is the liefest thing that our Lord
asketh, ¹⁸⁰
And eke the straight way that goeth into
heaven.
Therefore I say as I said before, in view of
these texts,
When all treasures are tried, Truth is the
best.
Now have I told thee what Truth is, that
no treasure is better,
I may no longer linger; now our Lord keep
thee!

² B *chained*.

³ Give and it shall be given unto you, *Luke*, vi, 38.

PASSUS II

Yet kneeled I on my knees, and cried to
 her for grace,
 And said, "Mercy, madame, for the love
 of Mary of heaven,
 That bore the blessed babe, that bought us
 on the cross,
 Teach me the natural skill to know the
 False."
 "Look on the left hand," quoth she, "and
 see where he standeth,
 Both False and Flattery, and all his whole
 following!"
 I looked on the left side, as the lady me
 taught;
 Then was I ware of a woman, wonderfully
 clothed,
 Trimmed with fur, the richest upon earth,
 Crowned with a crown, the king hath no
 better.¹⁰
 All her five fingers were furnished with
 rings
 Of the preciouslest jewelery that prince ever
 wore.
 In red scarlet she rode, ribboned with gold,
 There is no queen more gorgeous that on
 earth quick is and alive.
 "What is this woman," quoth I, "thus
 wonderfully attired?"
 "That is Meed,¹ the maiden," quoth she,
 "that hath me marred oft,
 And lied about my lore to lords about.
 In the Pope's palace she is as privy as myself;
 And so should she not be, for Wrong was
 her sire.
 Out of Wrong she sprang to misfortune of
 many.²⁰
 I ought to be higher than she, for I am
 better born.
 Tomorrow is the marriage made of Meed
 and False;
 Flattery, with fair speech, hath brought
 them together,
 And Guile hath persuaded her to grant all
 his will.
 And all is by Liar's leading that they live
 together.
 Tomorrow is the marriage made, true as I
 tell thee,
 That thou might'st know, if thou wilt, what
 they all are

That belong to that lordship, the great and
 the small.
 Know them there if thou canst, and keep
 thee from them all,
 If thou desirest to dwell with Truth in his
 bliss;
 Learn His law that is so loyal, and then
 teach it further.³⁰
 I may no longer linger, to our Lord I com-
 mend thee.
 And become a good man, spite of greed, I
 advise."
 When she was gone from me, I looked
 and beheld
 All this rich retinue that reigned with
 False
 Were bid to the bridal on both of the sides.
 Sir Simony is sent for, to seal the charters
 That False or Flattery at any price had
 got,
 And dower Meed therewith, in marriage
 for ever.
 But there was neither hall nor house that
 might harbour the people
 That each field was not full of folk al-
 about.⁴
 In midst of a mountain, at the hour of
 mid-morning
 Was pitched a pavilion, a proud one for the
 nonce;
 And ten thousand of tents spread out be-
 sides,
 For knights from the country and strangers
 about,
 For assizers, for summoners, for sellers, for
 buyers,
 For ignorant, for learned, for laborers in
 villages,
 And for the flattering friars, all the four
 orders,
 All to witness well what the deed desired,
 In what manner Meed in marriage was en-
 dowed;⁵⁰
 To be fastened with False, the fee was
 levied.
 Then Flattery fetched her forth, and to
 False gave her
 On condition that False shall sustain her
 forever,
 She to be obedient and ready his bidding
 to fulfil,
 In bed and at board, obedient and courte-
 ous,
 And as Sir Simony shall say, to follow his
 will.

¹ Meed is properly reward; but the signification here
 varies from legitimate payment to gross bribery. It is
 often best translated by "graft."

Now Simony and Civil Law stand forth
 both,
 Unfolding the dowry that Falseness made,
 And thus began these men and bellowed
 full loud:
 "This know and witness, all that dwell on
 earth, 60
 That I, Flattery, endow False with that
 maiden Meed,
 To be present in pride, for poor or for
 rich,¹
 With the Earldom of Envy ever to last,
 With all the Lordship [of Lechery]² in
 length and in breadth;
 With the Kingdom of Covetousness I crown
 them together,
 With the Isle of Usury and Avarice the
 false,
 Gluttony and great oaths I give them to-
 gether,
 With all delights and lusts the devil to
 serve,
 With all the service of Sloth I endow them
 together;
 To have and to hold, and all their heirs
 after, 70
 With the appurtenances of purgatory, into
 the pains of hell:
 Yielding for this thing, at the year's end,
 Their souls to Satan, to send into pain,
 There to dwell with Wrong, while God is
 in heaven."
 In witness of which thing Wrong was the
 first,
 Pierce the pardoner, a Pauline doctor,
 Bett the beadle of Buckinghamshire,
 Randolph the reeve of the Rutland district,
 Taborers and tumblers and tapsters many,
 Mund the miller and many more besides.
 In the date of the devil³ the deed was
 sealed, 81
 In sight of Sir Simony and by notaries'
 signets.
 Then tormented was Theology when he
 this tale heard,
 And said to Civil Law, "Sorrow on thy
 head
 Such a wedding to make to render Truth
 wroth;
 And ere this wedding be wrought, woe thee
 betide!
 For Meed is a wealthy one, a maiden with
 goods;

God grant us to give her where Truth will
 assign!
 And thou hast given her to a trickster, God
 give thee sorrow!
 The text telleth not so, Truth knows the
 sooth: 90
Dignus est operarius mercede sua; ⁴
 'Worthy is the workman his hire to have';
 And thou hast bestowed her on False, fie
 on thy law!
 For lechers and liars lightly thou trustest,
 Simony and thyself injure Holy Church;
 Ye shall abide it both, by God that me
 made,
 At one year's end when ye reckon shall;
 He and these notaries annoy the people.
 For well ye know, deceivers, unless your
 wits fail,
 That False is a schemer, a shirker of work,
 And a bastard born of Beelzebub's kin. 100
 And Meed is a jewelled one, a maiden of
 gentry,
 She might kiss the king for cousin, if she
 would.
 Work by wisdom and then by wit,
 Lead her to London, where law is handled,
 See if legally it be allowed that they lie to-
 gether,
 And if the justice will adjudge her to be
 joined with False.
 Yet beware of the wedding, for wise is
 Truth,
 For Conscience is of his council, and know-
 eth you each one;
 And if he find such defect that ye with False
 hold
 It shall oppress your souls sorely at
 last." 110
 To this Civil Law assented, but Simony
 would not
 Till he had silver for his advice and his seal.
 Then fetched Flattery forth florins enough,
 And bade Guile go and give gold about,
 And especially to these notaries that they
 have no lack;
 And fee False Witness with florins enough,
 For he can master Meed and make her do
 his will;
 For where falseness is often found, there
 faith faileth.
 When the gold was given, great were the
 thanks
 To False and to Flattery, for their fair
 gifts. 120

¹ B *To be prynces in pryde and pouerte to despise.*

² B C. ³ Presumably, in parody of *Anno Domini*.

⁴ *Luke, x, 7.*

Many came to comfort False against care,
And swore on holy relies, "Cease shall we
never

Ere Meed be thy wedded wife, through
wisdom of us all.

For we have so mastered Meed with our
smooth words

That she agrees to go with a good will
To London to look if the law will

Judge you jointly to be joined for ever."

Then was False fain, and Flattery blithe,
And had all men called from the country
about

To array them ready, both burgesses and
sheriffs, 130

To wend with them to Westminster, to
witness the deed.

Then hunted they for horses to carry them
thither;

But Flattery fetched forth foals of the best,
And set Meed on the back of a sheriff
newly shod,

And False on a juror that softly trotted,
(For Falseness against the faith jurors
seduceth,

Through cumbering of covetousness, to
climb over truth,

That the faith is' down trodden and falsely
defamed,

And Falseness is become a lord, and lives
as he likes):

Flattery on a fair speech, full finely at-
tired; 140

For fair speech without faith is brother to
Falseness;

And thus jurors are summoned to serve the
false,

And fair speech for Flattery who many
deceives.

Then notaries who had no horses, annoyed
they were

That Simony and Civil Law should go on
foot.

Then said Civil Law, and swore by the rood,
That summoners should be saddled and
serve them each one;

"And have provisors appareled, in palfrey
wise,

Sir Simony himself shall sit on their backs,
And all deans and sub-deans as prancers
prepare 150

For they shall bear bishops and bring them
to rest.

The people of the Paulines, for pleas in
the consistory,

Shall serve myself, who Civil Law am
called;

Put a cart saddle on our commissary, our
cart he shall draw,

And fetch our victuals from the fornicators;
And make of Liar a long cart, to draw all
these others,

Story-tellers and frauds that on foot re-
main."

Now False and Flattery fare forth to-
gether,

And Meed in the midst, and all the crowd
after.

Leisure I lack to tell the train that follows
them, 160

Of as many manners of men as on earth
live.

But Guile was leader and guided them all.
Soothness saw them well and said but little,
But pricked on his palfrey, and passed
them all,

And came to the king's court, and Con-
science told,

And Conscience to the king repeated it
again.

"Now, by Christ," quoth the king, "if I
might catch

False or Flattery, or any of his fellows,
I would be wreaked on these wretches that
work so ill,

And have them hanged by the neck, and
all that maintain them; 170

No man on earth shall bail out ¹ the least
of them,

But right as the law decides, let it fall on
them all.

And command the constable, that came at
the first,

To attack the traitors, in spite of any bribe;
I order you to fetter False fast, in spite of
any kind of gifts,

And to cut off Guile's head, let him go no
further;

And bring Meed to me, in spite of them all.
To Simony and Civil Law I send a warning

That Holy Church for them is harmed for
ever.

And if ye catch Liar, let him not escape 180
Being set on the pillory, in spite of any
prayer;

I bid thee watch for them well, let none of
them escape."

Dread at the door stood, and the din
heard,

¹ B C. *meynprise*. A *meyntene*.

And quickly went he to warn the False,
 And bade him flee fast, and his fellows too.
 Then False for fear fled to the friars,
 And Guile took to flight, in fear of death;
 But merchants met him, and made him
 abide,
 Besought him in their shops to sell their
 ware,
 Apparell'd him as a 'prentice, the people to
 serve. 190
 Lightly Liar leapt away thence,
 Lurked through lanes, lugged about by
 many.
 He was nowhere welcome, spite of his many
 tales,
 But hunted out everywhere, and ordered
 to pack.
 Pardoners had pity, and took him indoors,
 Washed him and wrung [his clothes], and
 wound him in clouts,
 And sent him on Sundays with seals to
 churches,
 And for pence gave pardon, pounds at a time.
 This learned the leeches, and letters to him
 sent.
 To dwell with them, diagnoses to make. 200
 Grocers spake with him to look after their
 wares,
 For he had skill in their craft, and knew
 many gums.
 Minstrels and messengers met with him
 once,
 And held him back half a year and eleven
 weeks.
 Friars, with fair speeches, fetched him
 thence;
 That visitors might know him not, kept him
 like a friar;
 But he hath leave to leap out, as often as
 he liketh,
 And is welcome when he will, and dwells
 with them oft.
 And all fled for fear and flew into cor-
 ners;
 Save Meed the maiden, no man dared
 abide; 210
 But, truly to tell, she trembled for fear,
 And wept, too, and wrung her hands, when
 she was arrested.

PASSUS III

Now is Meed the maiden taken, and no
 more of them all,
 By beables and bailiffs, brought to the
 king.

The king called a clerk, I know not his
 name,
 To take Meed the maiden, and make her at
 ease.
 "I shall try her myself, and truly inquire
 What man in this world would be dearest
 to her.
 And if she work by my wit, and my will
 follow,
 I shall forgive her the guilt, so help me
 God!"
 Courteously the clerk then, as the king
 commanded,
 Took the maiden by the middle, and
 brought her to the chamber. 10
 There was mirth and minstrelsy to please
 Meed withal.
 Those that dwell at Westminster worship
 her all.
 Gently, with joy, the Justice soon
 Repaired to the chamber where the lady
 was,
 Comforted her kindly, and made her good
 cheer,
 And said, "Mourn thou not, Meed, nor be
 thou sorrowful,
 For we will guide the king and thy way
 shape,
 For all the craft of Conscience, and scheme,
 as I trow,
 That thou shalt have both might and mas-
 tery, and do what thou likest
 With the king and the commons, and the
 court too." 20
 Mildly then Meed thanked them all
 For their great goodness, and gave them
 each one
 Goblets of pure gold, and pieces of silver,
 Rings with rubies, and riches enough,
 The least of their company a mutton¹ of
 gold.
 Then took they their leave, these lordings,
 of Meed.
 With that there came clerks to comfort
 the same:
 "We bid thee be blithe, for we be thine
 own
 To work thy will, while our life lasteth."
 Courteously then she promised them the
 same, 30
 To love them loyally and make them
 lords,
 And in consistory at court to tell their
 names.

¹ A gold coin.

"No ignorance shall hinder them, the most ignorant that I love,
From being advanced; for I am known
Where learned clerks are left in the lurch."

Then came there a confessor, caped like a friar;

To Meed the maiden full meekly he bowed,
And said full softly, as if it were in shrift,
"Though learned and lay had all by thee lain,

And though False had followed thee these fifteen winters,

I shall absolve thee myself, for a load of wheat,

And also be thy bawd, and bear well thy errand

Among clerks and knights, to bring down Conscience."

Then Meed, for her misdeeds, to that man kneeled,

And shrove her of her sins, shamefully, I trow.

She told him a tale, and gave him a noble —
To be her bedesman, and her bawd after.

Then he absolved her soon, and next to her said,

"We have a window a-making, will cost us full dear:

If thou wouldst glaze the gable, and grave therein thy name,

Secure should thy soul be to dwell in heaven."

"Knew I that," quoth the woman, "there is neither window nor altar,

That I would n't make or mend, and my name write thereon,

That each man should say, I should be sister of your house."

But God to all good folk such graving forbids,

And saith, *Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra*:¹

'Let not thy left hand, late nor early,
Be aware what thy right hand works or bestows.'

But share it so secretly that pride be not seen

Neither in sight nor in soul; for God himself knoweth

Who is courteous or kind, covetous or the contrary.

Therefore, I teach you, lords, such writing to leave,

¹ *Matthew*, vi, 3.

The writing in windows of your good deeds,

Or calling to God's people, when ye give your doles;

Peradventure you have your hire for it here.

For our Saviour it saith, and himself preacheth,

Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam; ²

'Here verily they have received their reward forthwith.'

Mayors and masters, and ye that are go-betweenes

'Twixt the king and the commons, to guard the laws,

To punish on pillories, or on cucking-stools,
Brewers, bakers, butchers, and cooks,

For these are the men on earth that most harm work

To the poor people that buy in small parcels.

They pilfer from the people privily and oft,
And grow rich through retailing, and buy themselves rents

With what the poor people should put in their bellies.

For if they acted honestly, they would not build so high,

Nor buy burgh holdings, be ye certain.

But Meed the maiden the mayor she besought

From all such sellers silver to take,
Or presents, not in pence, as cups of silver,

Rings with rubies, the retailer to favor.

"For my love," quoth the lady, "love them well, each one,

And suffer them to sell somewhat beyond reason."

But Solomon the sage, a sermon he made,
To amend mayors and men that guard the law,

And told them this theme that I shall tell now:

Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera.³

Among these lettered⁴ men this Latin meaneth

That fire shall fall and burn at the last
The houses and the homes of them that desire

For to have gifts in youth or in eld.

² *Matthew*, vi, 2.

³ Fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery, *Job*, xv, 34.

⁴ A lewede.

Now be ye ware, if ye will, ye masters of
 the law,
 For the truth shall be sought of your souls,
 so help me God!
 The toleration that ye grant such wrongs to
 work.
 While the chance is in your choice, choose
 ye the best.
 The king came from council, and called
 for Meed,
 And sent off quickly servants to fetch
 her,
 And brought her to the presence, with bliss
 and with joy;
 With mirth and with minstrelsy they
 pleased her each one.
 Courteously the king commenceth to tell,
 To Meed the maiden speaketh those words:
 "Unwisely, I wis, wrought hast thou oft; ¹⁰¹
 But worse wroughtest thou never than
 when thou False took.
 But I forgive thee this guilt, and grant
 thee my grace;
 Henceforth to thy deathday do so no more.
 I have a knight called Conscience, come
 lately from far,
 If he wish thee to wife, wilt thou him
 have?"
 "Yea, lord," quoth that lady, "Lord for-
 bid I should other!
 Unless I bow to your bidding, hang me at
 once!"
 Then was Conscience called to come and
 appear
 Before the king and his council, clerks and
 others. ¹¹⁰
 Kneeling, Conscience to the king made
 obeisance,
 To know what his will was, and what he
 would do.
 "Wilt thou wed this woman," quoth the
 king, "if I will assent?
 She is fain of thy fellowship, and would be
 thy mate."
 "Nay," quoth Conscience to the king,
 "Christ forbid it me!
 Ere I wed such a wife, woe me betide!
 She is frail of her flesh, fickle of her
 tongue,
 She maketh men misdo many score times;
 Trusting to her treasure, find sorrow full
 many.
 To wives and widows wantonness she
 teacheth; ¹²⁰
 Learneth them lechery that love her gifts;

Our father Adam¹ she brought down with
 fair promise;
 Poisoned popes, and impaireth Holy Church.
 There is no better bawd, by Him that me
 made!
 Between heaven and hell, in earth though
 men sought.
 She is wanton in her wishes, tale-bearing
 with her tongue,
 Common as the cart-road to knaves and to
 all;
 To priests, to minstrels, to lepers in hedges,
 Jurors and summoners, such men her praise;
 Sheriffs of shires were lost but for her. ¹³⁰
 She causeth men to lose their land, and
 their lives after,
 And letteth prisoners go, and payeth for
 them oft.
 She giveth the jailer gold and groats to-
 gether,
 To unfetter the false, to flee where they
 like.
 She taketh the true by the top, and tieth
 him fast,
 And for hate hangeth him that harm did
 never.
 They that are curst in consistory count it
 not at a rush,
 For she gives capes to the commissary, and
 coats to the clerks;
 She is absolved as soon as herself it pleas-
 eth.
 She may as much do in space of one month
 As your secret seal in seven score days. ¹⁴¹
 She is privy with the pope, as provisors
 know;
 Sir Simony and she put seals on the bulls;
 She blesseth the bishops, though ignorant
 they be.
 Prebendaries, parsons, priests, she main-
 taineth,
 To keep lemans and concubines all their
 life days,
 And bring forth children against the laws
 forbidding it.
 Where she stands well with the king, woe
 to the realm!
 For she is favorable to False who tramples
 Truth oft.
 Barons and burgesses she brings into servi-
 tude, ¹⁵⁰
 She bribes with her jewels, our justices she
 ruins.

¹ So Vernon MS. All others read *Your father*; i.e. Edward II.

She lieth against the law, and hindereth it
 so hard
 That faith may make no headway, her
 florins go so thick.
 She leadeth the law as she liketh, and love-
 days maketh,
 Bewilderment for a poor man, though he
 plead ever.
 Law is so lordly and loath to make an end
 Without presents or pence, it pleaseth full
 few.
 Learning and covetousness she coupleth
 together.
 This is the life of the lady, our Lord give
 her sorrow!
 And all that maintain her, mischance them
 betide! 160
 For the poor may have no power to com-
 plain though they suffer,
 Such a master is Meed among men of
 goods."
 Then mourned Meed, and made her moan
 to the king
 To have space to speak, hoping to succeed.
 Then the king granted her grace with a
 good will:
 "Excuse thyself if thou canst, I can say no
 more;
 For Conscience hath accused thee, to dis-
 miss thee for ever."
 "Nay, lord," quoth that lady, "believe him
 the worse
 When ye know verily where the wrong
 lieth.
 Where mischief is great, lord, Meed may
 help, 170
 And thou knowest, Conscience, I came not
 to chide
 Nor to defame thy person with a proud
 heart.
 Well thou wittest, Conscience, unless thou
 wilt lie,
 Thou hast hung on my neck eleven times,
 And also grasped my gold, and given it
 where thou likedst.
 Why thou art wroth now, seems to me a
 wonder,
 For yet I can, as before, honor thee with
 gifts,
 And maintain thy manhood, more than thou
 knowest,
 And thou hast foully defamed me, before
 the king here.
 For never killed I a king, nor counselled
 thereto; 180

Nor did I ever as thou thinkest,¹ I appeal
 to the king.
 In Normandy was he not annoyed for my
 sake;
 But thou thyself, in truth, didst shame him
 there,
 Creptest into a cabin, to keep thy nails
 from cold,
 Thoughtest that winter would have lasted
 ever,
 And dreadedst to have been dead for a dim
 cloud,
 And hastedst homeward for thy belly-
 hunger.
 Without pity, pillager, poor men thou rob-
 bedest,
 And bore their brass on thy back to Calais
 to sell.
 There I stayed with my lord, his life to
 save, 190
 Made him mirth full much, to leave off
 mourning,
 Clapped them on the backs, their hearts to
 embolden,
 Made them leap for hope to have me at
 demand:
 Had I been marshal of his men, by Mary
 of heaven!
 I durst have laid my life, and no less bet,
 He'd have been lord of that land, in length
 and in breadth;
 And also king of that kith, his kin to help;
 The least bairn of his blood a baron's peer.
 Truly, thou Conscience, thou didst counsel
 him thence,
 To leave that lordship for a little silver, 200
 That is the richest realm that the rain falls
 upon!
 It becometh a king who keepeth a realm
 To give meed to men that meekly him
 serve;
 To aliens, to all men, to honor them with
 gifts.
 Meed maketh him beloved and held to be
 a man.
 Emperors and earls, and all manner of lords,
 Through gifts get young men to run and
 to ride.
 The pope and his prelates presents receive,
 And give men meed to maintain their laws.
 Servants for their service — ye see well the
 truth — 210
 Get meed from their masters as they may
 agree.

¹ A *dust*; B *demest*.

Beggars for their prayers beg men for meed,
 Minstrels for their mirth ask for meed.
 The king gives meed to his men to make peace in the land;
 Men that teach children¹ meed from them crave.
 Priests that preach to the people to be good
 Ask meed and mass-pence and their meat too.
 All kinds of craftsmen crave meed for their 'prentices;
 Meed and merchandise must needs go together.
 There may no wight, as I ween, without meed live."²²⁰
 "Now," quoth the king to Conscience, "by Christ, as methinks,
 Meed is worthy much mastery to have!"
 "Nay," quoth Conscience to the king, and kneeled to the ground;
 "There be two kinds of meed, my lord, by thy leave.
 The one good God of His grace giveth, in His bliss,
 To them that work well while they are here.
 The prophet preached it, and put in the Psalter,
Qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram, etc.²
 Take no meed, my lord, from men that are true;
 Love them, believe them, for our Lord of heaven's love.
 God's meed and His mercy therewith thou mayst win."²³⁰
 But there is a meed without measure that desireth mastery,
 To maintain misdoers meed do they take;
 And thereof saith the Psalter in the end of the Psalms,
*In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt; dextra eorum repleta est muneribus;*³
 That their right hand is heaped full of gifts,
 And they that grasp their gifts, so help me God!
 They shall abide it bitterly, or the Book lieth.

¹ B. A. knoweth clerkes.

² He that putteth not out his money to usury . . . shall never be moved. *Psalms*, xv, 5.

³ In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. *Psalms*, xxvi, 10.

Priests and parsons, that pleasure desire
 And take meed and money for masses that they sing,
 Shall have reward in this world, as Matthew hath granted:
*Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam.*⁴
 What laborers and low folk get from their masters²⁴⁰
 Is no manner of meed, but moderate hire.
 In merchandise is no meed, I may it well avow;
 It is a permutacion, one penny for another.
 But didst thou never read *Kings*,⁵ thou recreant Meed,
 Why vengeance fell on Saul and his children?
 God sent to say, by Samuel's mouth,
 That Agag and Amalek, and all his people after,
 Should die for a deed that his ancestors had done,
 Against Israel, and Aaron, and Moses his brother.
 Samuel said to Saul, 'God sendeth thee commandment'²⁵⁰
 To be obedient and ready his bidding to do:
 "Wend thither with thy host women to kill,
 Children and churls, chop them to death;
 Look thou kill the king, covet not his goods
 For millions of money; murder them each one,
 Men and beasts, burn them all to ashes."'
 And because he killed not the king, as Christ himself commanded,
 Coveted fair cattle, and killed not his beasts,
 But brought with him the beasts, as the Bible telleth,
 God sent to say that Saul should die,²⁶⁰
 And all his seed for that sin shamefully end.
 Such a mischief Meed made the king to have,
 That God hated him ever, and his heirs after.
 The conclusion of this clause care I not to show,
 In case it should annoy me; an end will I make:
 And even as Agag had it, to some will it happen;

⁴ Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward, *Matthew*, vi, 2.

⁵ 1 Samuel, xv.

Samuel will slay him, and Saul will be
 blamed,
 David shall be diademed and daunt them all,
 And one Christian king keep us each one.
 Conscience knoweth this, for common sense
 me taught ²⁷⁰
 That Reason shall reign, and realms govern;
 Meed shall no more be master on earth,
 But Love and Lowness and Loyalty to-
 gether.
 And on him that trespasseth against Truth,
 or doth against his will,
 Loyalty shall execute the law, or he shall
 lose his life.
 Shall no sergeant for that service wear a
 silk hood,
 Nor any striped robe with rich fur.
 Meed, from the misdoers, maketh men so
 rich
 That Law is become a lord, and Loyalty is
 poor.
 Unkindness is commander, and Kindness is
 banished. ²⁸⁰
 But Common Sense shall come yet, and
 Conscience together,
 And make of Law a laborer, such Love
 shall arise."

PASSUS IV

"Cease," said the king, "I suffer you no
 more.
 Ye shall be reconciled in truth, and serve
 me both.
 Kiss her," quoth the king, "Conscience, I
 command."
 "Nay, by Christ," quoth Conscience, "I
 take my leave rather!
 Unless Reason advise me thereto, first will
 I die!"
 "And I command thee," quoth the king to
 Conscience then,
 "That thou haste thee to ride, and Reason
 thou fetch;
 Command him that he come, my counsel to
 hear.
 For he shall rule my realm, and advise me
 the best
 About Meed and others, and what man
 shall wed her; ³⁰
 And take care, Conscience, so help me
 Christ!
 How thou ledest my people, learned and
 lay."
 "I am pleased with that promise," said the
 fellow then,

And rode right to Reason, and whispered
 in his ear,
 Said as the king sent, and then took his
 leave.
 "I shall array me to ride," quoth Reason,
 "rest thee awhile," —
 And called Cato his servant, courteous of
 speech —
 "Set my saddle upon Suffer-till-I-see-my-
 time,
 And look thou girth him well with very
 many girths;
 Hang on him a heavy bridle to bear his
 head low; ²⁰
 Yet will he make many a neigh, ere he
 come there."
 Then Conscience on his steed rideth forth
 fast,
 And Reason with him rideth, hurrying hard,
 But on a wain Witty and Wisdom together
 Followed them fast, for they had to do
 In Exchequer and Chancery, to be dis-
 charged of things;
 And rode fast, for Reason must advise
 them how best
 To save themselves from shame and from
 harm.
 But Conscience came first to court by a mile,
 And ran forward with Reason, right to the
 king. ³⁰
 Courteously the king then came to Rea-
 son,
 Between himself and his son set him on the
 bench,
 And consulted a great while wisely to-
 gether.
 Then Peace came to parliament, put up
 petition,
 How that Wrong against his will his wife
 had taken,
 And how he ravished Rose, Reynald's love,
 And Margaret of her maidenhood, for all
 she could do.
 "Both my geese and my pigs his fellows
 fetched away;
 I dare not for dread of them fight nor
 chide.
 He borrowed of me Bayard, and brought
 him again never, ⁴⁰
 Nor any farthing for him, for aught that I
 could plead.
 He maintaineth his men to murder mine
 own,
 Forestall^{leth} me at fairs, brawleth at my
 bargainings,

Breaketh in my barn-door, and beareth
away my wheat,
And giveth me but a tally for ten quarter
of oats.

And yet he beat me besides, and lieth by
my maiden;

I am not so hardy to look him in the face."
The king knew he said sooth, for Conscience
him told.

Wrong was a-feared then, and Wisdom
sought

To make his peace with pence, and proffered
forth money,

And said, "Had I love from the king, little⁵⁰
would I reckon

Though Peace and his power complained on
me ever."

Wisdom went then, and so did Wit,
Because Wrong had done so wicked a deed,
And warned Wrong then, with such a wise
tale : —

"Whoso worketh wilfully maketh wrath oft:
I say it about thyself, thou shalt it soon find.
Unless Meed make it right, thy ill-luck is
on thee,

For both thy life and thy land lie in the
king's grace."

Wrong then to Wisdom wept for help, ⁶⁰
Him for his handy-dandy¹ readily he paid.
Then Wisdom and Wit went together

And took Meed with them, mercy to win.
Peace put forth his head, showed his bloody
poll :

"Without guilt, God wot, got I this harm."
Conscience and the king knew the truth,
Knew well that Wrong was a wicked one
ever.

But Wisdom and Wit were zealous and
eager

To overcome the king with money if they
might.

The king swore then, by Christ, and by his
crown both, ⁷⁰

That Wrong for his works should woe suffer,
And commanded a constable to cast him in
irons :

"He shall not these seven years see his feet
once."

"God wot," quoth Wisdom, "that were not
the best;

If he amends make, let him give surety;
To be a pledge for his bale,² and buy him
boot,³

¹ Probably, corrupt influence.

² Injury, harm done.

³ Redress.

And amend his misdeed, and be always the
better."

Wit accorded herewith and said to him the
same;

"It is better that Boot should bring down
Bale

Than that Bale be beaten and Boot be
ne'er the better."⁸⁰

Then Meed humbled herself and mercy be-
sought,

And proffered Peace a present all of pure
red gold:

"Have this from me," quoth she, "to amend
thy harm with,

For I will wager for Wrong, he will do so
no more."

Peace then pitifully prayed the king
To have mercy on that man, that harmed
him off;

"Because he hath pledged me amends, as
Wisdom him taught,

I forgive him that guilt, with a good-will;
So that ye assent thereto, I can no more
say,

For Meed hath made me amends, I may no
more ask."⁹⁰

"Nay," quoth the king then, "so God give
me bliss!

Wrong wendeth not so away, till I wot
more;

Leapt he so lightly away, laugh he would
And again be the bolder to beat my serv-
ants;

Unless Reason have ruth on him, he re-
maineth in the stocks

As long as I live, unless more love change
it."

Then some advised Reason to have ruth
of that rascal,

And to counsel the king and Conscience
both;

That Meed might be surety, Reason they
besought.

"Advise me not," quoth Reason, "ruth to
have,"¹⁰⁰

Till lords and ladies all love truth,
Till Peronelle's fur be put in her box,

Till over-cherished children be chastened
with rods,

Till the holiness of ribalds be held [com-
mon] as a hind;

Till clerks and knights be courteous with
their mouths

And hate to do their ribaldry, and use it no
more;

Till priests their preaching prove in themselves,
 And do it in deed, to draw us to God;
 Till Saint James be sought where I shall ordain,
 And no man go to Galicia, unless he go for ever; ¹¹⁰
 And no Rome-runners for robbers abroad
 Bear over sea silver that beareth the king's stamp,
 Neither groats nor gold graven with the king's crown,
 Upon forfeit of that fee, whoever finds it at Dover,
 Unless it be a merchant or his men, or messenger with letters,
 Or provisors or priests that popes advance.
 "And yet," quoth Reason, "by the rood,
 I shall no ruth have,
 While Meed hath any mastery to plead in this hall;
 But I may show you examples, I say it of myself.
 For I say it for my soul's sake, if it so were ¹²⁰
 That I were king with crown, to keep a realm,
 Should never Wrong in this world, that I might know of,
 Be unpunished by my power, on peril of my soul!
 Nor get grace through gift, so help me God!
 Nor for meed get mercy, unless meekness cause it.
 For *Nullum Malum*, the man, met with *Impunitum*,
 And bade *Nullum Bonum* be *irremuneratum*.¹
 Let thy clerk, sir king, construe this in English;
 And if thou workest it wisely I wager both my ears
 That Law shall be a laborer and cart dung a-field, ¹³⁰
 And Love shall lead thy land, as it dearly pleaseth thee."
 Clerks that were confessors got together in couples
 For to construe this clause, and explain it after.
 When Reason to these men rehearsed these words,
 Was none in that courtroom, great or small,
 That held not Reason a master there, and Meed a great wretch.

¹ No evil unpunished; no good unrewarded.

Love made light of Meed, and laughed her to scorn,
 And said it so loud that Soothness it heard:
 "Whoso wisheth her to wife, for wealth of her goods,
 Unless he be picked for a cuckold, cut off both mine ears!" ¹⁴⁰
 Was neither Wisdom then, nor Witty his fellow,
 That could utter a word, to gainsay Reason;
 But stared in a brown study and stood as beasts.
 The king accorded, by Christ, to Reason's cunning,
 And repeated what Reason had rightly shown:
 "But it is hard, by mine head, to bring it hereto,
 All my lieges to lead in this level way."
 "By Him that was stretched on the rood," quoth Reason to the king,
 "Unless I rule thus thy realm, rend out my ribs!
 If it be so that obedience be at my command." ¹⁵⁰
 "I assent," quoth the king, "by Saint Mary, my lady,
 When my council is come, of clerks and of earls.
 But readily, Reason, thou ridest not hence,
 For as long as I live, let thee go will I not."
 "I am ready," quoth Reason, "to remain with thee ever;
 So that Conscience be our counsellor, care I for no better."
 "I grant gladly," quoth the king, "God forbid he fail us,
 And as long as I live, live we together."

PASSUS V

The king and his knights to the church went
 To hear matins and mass, and to the meat after.
 Then waked I from my winking, I was woeful withal
 That I had not heavier slept and seen more.
 Ere I a furlong had fared, a faintness me seized,
 That further might I not a-foot, for default of sleep.
 I sat softly adown, and said my creed,
 And so I babbled on my beads that it brought me asleep.
 Then saw I much more than I before told,

For I saw the field full of folk that I before
 showed,
 And Conscience with a cross came to preach.¹⁰
 He prayed the people to have pity on
 themselves,
 And proved that these pestilences were for
 pure sin,
 And this southwestern wind on a Saturday
 at even
 Was clearly for pride, and for no cause
 else,
 Peartrees and pluntrees were dashed to
 the ground,
 In ensample to men that we should do the
 better.
 Beeches and broad oaks were blown to the
 earth.
 And turned the tail upward in token of
 dread
 That deadly sin ere Doomsday should de-
 stroy them all.²⁰
 On this matter I might mumble full long,
 But I say as I saw, so help me God !
 How Conscience with a cross commenced to
 preach.
 He bade wasters go work at what they best
 could,
 And win what they wasted with some sort
 of craft.
 He prayed Peronelle her fur-trimming to
 leave,
 And keep it in her coffer for capital at need.
 Thomas he taught to take two staves,
 And fetch home Felice from the cucking-
 stool.
 He warned Wat his wife was to blame,³⁰
 That her head-dress was worth a mark and
 his hood worth a groat.
 He charged merchants to chasten their
 children,
 Let them lack no respect, while they are
 young.
 He prayed priests and prelates together,
 What they preach to the people to prove it
 in themselves —
 "And live as ye teach us, we will love you
 the better."
 And then he advised the orders their rule
 to obey —
 "Lest the king and his council abridge your
 supplies,
 And be steward in your stead, till ye be
 better ordered.
 And ye that seek St. James, and saints at
 Rome,⁴⁰

Seek me Saint Truth, for He can save you
 all;
Qui cum patre et filio, fare you well !"
 Then ran Repentance and rehearsed this
 theme,
 And made William to weep water with his
 eyes.
 Pride Pernel Proud-heart flung herself on
 the ground,
 And lay long ere she looked up, and to Our
 Lady cried,
 And promised to Him who all of us made
 She would unsew her smock, and wear in-
 stead a hair shirt
 To tame her flesh with, that frail was to
 sin:
 "Shall never light heart seize me, but I
 shall hold me down⁵⁰
 And endure to be slandered as I never did
 before.
 And now I can put on meekness, and mercy
 beseech
 Of all of whom I have had envy in my
 heart."
 Lust Lecher said "Alas !" and to Our
 Lady cried
 To win for him mercy for his misdeeds,
 Between God himself and his poor soul,
 Provided that he should on Saturday, for
 seven years,
 Drink but with the duck and dine but once.
 Envy Envy, with heavy heart, asketh after
 shrift,
 And greatly his guiltiness beginneth to
 show.⁶⁰
 Pale as a pellet, in a palsy he seemed,
 Clothed in a coarse cloth, I could him not
 describe;
 A kirtle and a short cloak, a knife by his
 side;
 Of a friar's frock were the fronts of his
 sleeves.
 As a leek that had lain long in the sun
 So looked he with lean cheeks; foully he
 frowned.
 His body was swollen; for wrath he bit his
 lips.
 Wrathfully he clenched his fist, he thought
 to avenge himself
 With works or with words, when he saw his
 time.
 "Venom, or varnish, or vinegar, I trow,⁷⁰
 Boils in my belly, or grows there, I ween.
 Many a day could I not do as a man ought,
 Such wind in my belly wellethe ere I dine.

I have a neighbor nigh me, I have annoyed
 him oft,
 Blamed him behind his back, to bring him
 in disgrace,
 Injured him by my power, punished him full
 oft,
 Belied him to lords, to make him lose silver,
 Turned his friends to foes, with my false
 tongue;
 His grace and his good luck grieve me full
 sore.
 Between him and his household I have
 made wrath; 80
 Both his life and his limb were lost through
 my tongue.
 When I met in the market him I most hate,
 I hailed him as courteously as if I were his
 friend.
 He is doughtier than I, I dare do him no
 harm.
 But had I mastery and might, I had mur-
 dered him for ever!
 When I come to the church, and kneel be-
 fore the rood,
 And should pray for the people, as the
 priest teacheth us,
 Then I cry upon my knees that Christ give
 them sorrow
 That have borne away my bowl and my
 broad sheet.
 From the altar I turn mine eye and be-
 hold 90
 How Henry hath a new coat, and his wife
 another;
 Then I wish it were mine, and all the web
 with it.
 At his losing I laugh, in my heart I like
 it;
 But at his winning I weep, and bewail the
 occasion.
 I deem that men do ill, yet I do much
 worse,
 For I would that every wight in this world
 were my servant,
 And whoso hath more than I, maketh my
 heart angry.
 Thus I live loveless, like an ill-tempered
 dog,
 That all my breast swelleth with the bit-
 terness of my gall;
 No sugar is sweet enough to assuage it at
 all, 100
 Nor no remedy drive it from my heart;
 If shrift then should sweep it out, a great
 wonder it were."

"Yes, surely," quoth Repentance, and ad-
 vised him to good,
 "Sorrow for their sins saveth full many."
 "I am sorry," quoth Envy, "I am seldom
 other,
 And that maketh me so mad, for I may not
 avenge me."

Then came Covetousness, I
 could not describe him,
 So hungry and so hollow Sir Harvey looked.
 He was beetle-browed with two bleared
 eyes,

And like a leathern purse flapped his cheeks;
 In a torn tabard of twelve winters' age; 111
 Unless a louse could leap, I can not believe
 That she could wander on that walk, it was
 so threadbare.

"I have been covetous," quoth this Caitiff,
 "I admit it here;

For some time I served Sim at 'The Oak'
 And was his pledged apprentice, his profit
 to watch.

First I learned to lie, in a lesson or two,
 And wickedly to weigh was my second les-
 son.

To Winchester and to Weyhill I went to
 the fair

With many kinds of merchandise, as my
 master bade; 120

But had not the grace of guile gone among
 my ware,

It had been unsold these seven year, so
 help me God!

Then I betook me to the drapers, my
 grammar to learn,

To draw the list¹ along, to make it seem
 longer.

Among these rich striped cloths learned I
 a lesson,

Pierced them with a pack-needle, and
 pleated them together,

Put them in a press, and fastened them
 therein

Till ten yards or twelve were drawn out to
 thirteen.

And my wife at Westminster, that
 woollen cloth made,

Spake to the spinners to spin it soft. 130
 The pound that she weighed by, weighed a

quarter more
 Than my balance did, when I weighed true.

I bought her barley, she brewed it to sell;
 Penny-ale and white perry, she poured it
 together,

¹ The edge of the cloth, in measuring.

For laborers and low folk, that work for
their living.
The best in the bed-chamber lay by the
wall,

Whoso tasted thereof bought it ever after,
A gallon for a groat, God wot, no less
When it came in cups. Such tricks I used.
Rose the retailer is her right name; ¹⁴⁰
She hath been a huckster these eleven win-
ters.

But I swear now soothly that soon will I
quit,
And never wickedly weigh, nor false trade
practise,
But wend to Walsingham, and my wife
also,
And pray the Rood of Bromholm to bring
me out of debt."

Gluttony Now beginneth the Glutton to go
to the shrift,
And wanders churchwards, his shrift to tell,
Then Bet the brewster bade him good mor-
row,
And then she asked him whither he would
go. ¹⁴⁹

"To holy church," quoth he, "to hear mass,
Since I shall be shriven, and sin no more."

"I have good ale, gossip," quoth she;
"Glutton, what say you?"

"Hast aught in thy purse," quoth he, "any
hot spices?"

"Yea, Glutton, gossip," quoth she, "God
wot, full good;

I have pepper and peony-seeds, and a pound
of garlick,

A farthing worth of fennel-seed, for these
fasting days."

Then goeth Glutton in, and great oaths
after;

Cis the shoemaker's wife sat on the bench,
Wat the ward of the warren, and his wife
both,

Tomkin the tinker and twain of his serv-
ants; ¹⁶⁰

Hick the hackney-man, and Hogg the
needle seller,

Clarice of Cock's-Lane, and the clerk of the
church,

Sir Piers of Prie-Dieu, and Pernel of Flan-
ders,

Dawe the ditcher, and a dozen others.

A fiddler, a rat-catcher, a scavenger of
Cheapside,

A rope-maker, a riding-boy, and Rose the
dish-maker,

Godfrey of Garlickshire, and Griffin the
Welshman,

And of tradesmen a band, early in the
morning

Stand Glutton, with good-will, a treat in
good ale.

Then Clement the cobbler cast off his
cloak, ¹⁷⁰

And at "the new fair" made offer to bar-
ter it;

And Hick the ostler flung his hood after,
And bade Bett the butcher act on his be-
half.

Then were chapmen chosen, the articles to
value;

Whoso had the hood should have something
to boot.

They rose up rapidly, and whispered to-
gether,

And appraised the penny-worths, and parted
them by themselves;

There were oaths a-plenty, whoso might
hear them.

They could not, in conscience, accord to-
gether,

Till Robin the rope-maker was chosen to
arise, ¹⁸⁰

And named for an umpire, to avoid all de-
bate,

For he should appraise the pennyworths,
as seemed good to him.

Then Hick the ostler had the cloak,
On condition that Clement should have his
cup filled,

And have Hick the ostler's hood, and hold
him well served;

And he that first repented should straight
arise

And greet Sir Glutton with a gallon of
ale.

There was laughing and cheating ¹ and
"Let go the cup!"

Bargains and beverages began to arise,
And they sat so till evensong, and sang
some while, ¹⁹⁰

Till Glutton had gulped down a gallon and
a gill.

He had no strength to stand, till he his staff
had;

Then 'gan he to go like a gleeman's bitch,
Sometimes to the side, sometimes to the
rear,

Like a man laying lines to catch birds with.

¹ A loteryng; B loutyng; C lakeryng.

When he drew to the door, then his eyes
grew dim, ²⁰⁰
He stumbled at the threshold, and threw to
the ground.
Clement the cobbler caught Glutton by the
middle,
And to lift him up he laid him on his knees;
And Glutton was a great churl, and grim
in the lifting,
And coughed up a caudle in Clement's lap,
That the hungriest bound in Hertfordshire
Durst not lap that loathsomeness, so un-
lovely it smacketh;
So that, with all the woe in the world, his
wife and his wench
Bore him home to his bed, and brought him
therein.
And after all this surfeit, a sickness he
had, ²¹⁰
That he slept Saturday and Sunday, till sun
went to rest.
Then he waked from his winking, and
wiped his eyes;
The first word that he spake was, "Where
is the cup?"
His wife warned him then, of wickedness
and sin.
Then was he ashamed, that wretch, and
scratched his ears,
And 'gan to cry grievously, and great dole
to make
For his wicked life, that he had lived.
"For hunger or for thirst, I make my vow,
Shall never fish on Friday digest in my maw,
Till Abstinence, my aunt, have given me
leave; ²²⁰
And yet I have hated her all my life-time."
Sloth Sloth for sorrow fell down swoon-
ing,
Till *Vigilate*, the watcher, fetched water to
his eyes,
Let it flow on his face, and fast to him
cried,
And said, "Beware of despair, that will
thee betray.
'I am sorry for my sins,' say to thyself,
And beat thyself on the breast, and pray
God for grace,
For there is no guilt so great that His mercy
is not more."
Then Sloth sat up and sighed sore,
And made a vow before God, for his foul
sloth, ²³⁰
"There shall be no Sunday this seven year
(save sickness it cause)

That I shall not bring myself ere day to
the dear church,
And hear matins and mass, as I a monk
were.
No ale after meat shall withhold me thence,
Till I have heard evensong, I promise by
the rood.
And¹ yet I shall yield again — if I have so
much —
All that I wickedly won, since I had wit.
And though I lack a livelihood I will not
stop
Till each man shall have his own, ere I
hence wend:
And with the residue and the remnant, by
the rood of Chester, ²⁴⁰
I shall seek Saint Truth, ere I see Rome!"
Robert the robber, on *Reddite*² he looked,
And because there was not wherewith, he
wept full sore.
But yet the sinful wretch said to himself:
"Christ, that upon Calvary on the cross
died'st,
Though Dismas³ my brother besought grace
of thee,
And thou hadst mercy on that man for *me-
mento*⁴ sake,
Thy will be done upon me, as I have well
deserved
To have hell for ever if no hope there were.
So rue on me, Robert, that no counsel
have, ²⁵⁰
Nor ever ween to win by any craft that I
know.
But, for thy much mercy, mitigation I be-
seech;
Damn me not on Doomsday because I did
so ill."
But what befell this felon, I cannot well
show,
But well I know he wept hard, water with
his eyes,
And acknowledged his guilt to Christ again
thereafter,
That the pikestaff of Penitence he should
polish anew,
And leap with it o'er the land, all his life-
time,

¹ Ll. 236-259, dealing with the restitution of stolen goods, appear in C in connection with Avarice. The attaching of them to Sloth in A and B seems to point to some confusion in the text. Note that in A the sin of Wrath is omitted.

² Make restitution, *Romans*, xiii, 7.

³ The name given to the penitent thief in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

⁴ Remember me, *Luke*, xxiii, 42.

For he hath lain by *Latro*,¹ Lucifer's brother.

A thousand of men then throng together,
Weeping and wailing for their wicked
deeds,

Crying up to Christ, and to His clean Mother,²⁶¹
To give grace to seek Saint Truth, God
grant they so might !

PASSUS VI

Now ride these folk, and walk on foot
To seek that saint in strange lands.

But there were few men so wise that knew
the way thither,

But they bustled forth like beasts, over
valleys and hills,

For while they went after their own will,
they went all amiss;

Till it was late and long, when they a man
met,

Apparelled as a palmer, in pilgrim's weeds.
He bore a staff bound round with a broad
list²

In woodbine wise twisted around.

A bag and a bowl he bore by his side; 10

A hundred vials on his hat were set,

Signs of Sinai and shells of Galicia;

Many a cross on his cloak, and the keys of
Rome,

And the vernicle in front, that men should
him know,

And see by his signs whom he had sought.³

These folk asked him fairly from whence
he came.

"From Sinai," he said, "and from the
Sepulchre;

From Bethlehem and Babylon, I have been
in both;

In India and in Assisi, and in many other
places.

Ye may see by my signs that sit on my
hat 20

That I have walked full wide, in wet and
in dry,

And sought good saints for my soul's
health."

"Knowest thou a holy one men call
Saint Truth ?

Canst thou show us the way to where he
dwelleth ?"

¹ The word used in *Luke* of the crucified thieves.

² Edge of cloth.

³ The references here are to the badges showing the shrines a pilgrim had visited: the vial or ampulla for Thomas of Canterbury; the scallop shell for St. James of Compostella in Galicia; the cross for Palestine; the keys and the handkerchief of St. Veronica for Rome. "Sinai" refers to the shrine of St. Catharine there.

"Nay, so God gladden me," said the
man then,

"Saw I never palmer, with pikestaff nor
with scrip,

Such a saint seek, save now in this place."

"Peter!" quoth a Plowman, and put
forth his head,

"I know him as naturally as a scholar doth
his books;

Clean Conscience and Wit showed me to
his place, 30

And pledged me then to serve him for ever.

Both in sowing and in setting, while I work
might,

I have been his fellow these fifteen winters;

Have both sowed his seed and tended his
beasts,

And also cared for his corn and carried it
to house,

Ditched and delled, and done what he or-
dered,

Within and without watched his interests;
Among these people is no laborer whom he
loves more,

For though I say it myself, my service him
pleases.

I have my hire of him well, and sometimes
more; 40

He is the promptest payer that poor men
have;

He withholds from no kind his hire that he
hath it not at even.

He is as lowly as a lamb, lovely of speech;

And if ye will wit where he dwelleth

I will show you the way home to his place."

"Yea, dear Piers," said these palmers,
and proffered him hire.

"Nay, by the peril of my soul," quoth

Piers, and began to swear,

"I would not finger a farthing, for St.
Thomas's shrine !

Truth would love me the less for a great
while after !

But, ye that wend to him, this is the way
thither: 50

Ye must go through Meekness, both man
and wife,

Till ye come to Conscience, that Christ
may know the truth

That ye love him dearer than the life in
your hearts,

And then your neighbors next in no wise
injure

Otherwise than thou wouldest that men
should do to thee.

So bend your way by a brook, Be-obedi-
ent-in-speech,
Forth till ye find a ford Honor-your-fathers;
Wade in that water, wash yourselves well
there,
And ye shall leap the lightlier all your life-
time.
Soon shalt thou then see Swear-not-but-
thou-have-need; — 60
And-specially-not-in-vain - take-the-name-
of-God-Almighty.

Then will ye come by a croft, but go ye
not therein,
The croft called Covet-not-men's-cattle-
nor-their-wives-
Nor-none-of-their-servants-that-they-
might-be-hurt;
See thou break no bough there, unless it
be thine own.
Two stocks there stand, but stay thou not
there,
They are called Slay-not, Nor-steal-not;
strike forth by them both;
Leave them on thy left hand, look thou not
after them,
And hold well thy holy-day ever till even.
Then shalt thou turn aside at a brook, Bear-
no-false-witness, 70
It is furnished within with florins, and with
many oaths;
See thou pluck no plant there, for peril of
thy soul.

Then shalt thou see Say-sooth, so-it-is-to-
be-done-
And-look-that-thou-lie-not-for-any-man's-
bidding.

Then shall thou come to a court, clear
as the sun,
The moat is of Mercy, surrounding the manor,
And all the walls are of Wit to hold Will
outside;
The battlements are of Christendom, man-
kind to save,
Buttressed¹ with the Belief wherethrough
we must be saved.

All the houses are roofed, hall and cham-
bers, 80
With no lead but Love-as-brethren-of-one-
mother.

The tower wherein is Truth is set above
the sun,
He may do with the daystar whatever he
pleaseth.

¹ Lit., surmounted with wooden boardings, as in
medieval fortifications.

Death dare not do anything that he for-
biddeth.

Grace is called the gate-guard, a good man
in truth,

His man is called Amend-thou, for many
men know him;

Tell him this as a token, for truth knows
the sooth:

'I performed the penance that the priest en-
joined me;

I am sorry for my sins, and so shall I ever
be

When I think thereon, though I were a
pope.' 90

Bid Amend-thou humble himself to his mas-
ter once,

To lift up the wicket gate that the way
shut

When Adam and Eve ate their bane;²
For he hath the key of the catch, though
the king sleep.

And if Grace thee grant to go in in this
wise,

Thou shalt see Truth himself sit in thy
heart.

Then look that thou love Him well, and
His law hold;

But be well aware of Wrath, that wicked
wretch,

For he hath envy of Him that in thine
heart sitteth,

And putteth forth Pride to praise thy-
self. 100

Boldness in thy good deeds blindeth thine
eyes;

And so art thou driven out and the door
closed,

Locked and fastened to keep thee there-
out,

Haply a hundred year ere thou again en-
ter.

Thus mayst thou lose His love by thinking
well of thyself,

But get it again by Grace and by no gift
else.

And there are seven sisters that serve
Truth ever,

And are porters at posterns that to the
place belong.

The first is called Abstinence, and Humility
the second,

Charity and Chastity are two full choice
maidens, 110

Patience and Peace many people help,

² B apples unrosted.

Largess the lady leadeth in full many.
But whoso is sib to these sisters, so help me
God!

Is wonderfully welcome and fairly received.

And, but ye be sib to some of these seven,
It is full hard, by my head, any of you all
To get entrance at that gate unless greater
be the grace."

"By Christ," quoth a cut-purse, "I have
no kin there!"

"Nor I," quoth an ape-warden, "for aught
that I know!"

"Certain," quoth a waferseller, "knew I
this for truth,¹²⁰
I should go no foot further, for any friar's
preaching."

"Yes," quoth Piers the Plowman, and
preached for their good,

"Mercy is a maiden there and hath might
over all;

She is sib to all sinful men and her son also;
And through the help of these two (no
other hope have thou,)

Thou mightest get grace there, so thou go
betimes."

PASSUS VII

"This would be a wicked way, unless one
had a guide

Who might follow us each step, that there
we may come."

Quoth Perkin the plowman, "By Peter the
apostle,

I have a half-acre to plow, by the high-
way;

Were it well plowed, then with you would
I wend,

And show you the right way, till ye found
truth."

"That would be a long delay," quoth a
lady in a veil;

"What shall we women work at the while?"

"Some shall sew sacks, that the wheat spill
not,

And ye wives that have wool, work on it
fast,¹⁰

Spin it speedily, spare not your fingers,
Unless it be a holy day, or else a holy eve.

Look out your linen, and labor thereon
fast;

The needy and the naked, take heed how
they lie,

And cast on them clothes against the cold,
for so Truth willeth;

For I shall grant them livelihood, unless
the land fail,

As long as I live, for our Lord of Heaven's
love.

And ye, lovely ladies, with your long fin-
gers,

That have silk and sendal,¹ sew when you
have time

Chasubles for chaplains, and churches to
honor;

And all manner of men that by meat live
Help him to work well that your food win-
neth."

"By Christ," quoth a knight then, "thou
knowest us best!

Save one time truly, thus taught was I
never!

But teach me," quoth the knight; "if I can
plow,

I will help thee to labor while my life
lasteth."

"By Saint Peter," quoth Piers, "since
thou profferest so humbly

I shall work and sweat and sow for us both,
And also labor for thy love all my lifetime,

On condition that thou keep Holy Church
and myself³⁰

From wasters and wicked men that would
us destroy.

And go thou and hunt hardily hares and
foxes,

Bears and bucks that break men's hedges,
And fetch thee home falcons fowls to kill;

For they come into my croft and crop my
wheat."

Full courteously the knight conceived
these words;

"By my power, Piers, I plight thee my
troth,

To fulfill the bargain, while I may stand!"

"But yet one point," quoth Piers, "I shall
pray thee no more;

Look thou trouble no tenant, unless Truth
will assent:

And if poor men proffer you presents or
gifts,⁴⁰

Take them not; peradventure you may
them not deserve;

For thou shalt give them back again at one
year's end,

In a place of sore peril that purgatory is
called.

And beat thou not thy bondman, the better
thou shalt speed,

¹ A thin silken stuff.

(And be thyself true of tongue, and lying
tales hate;)
Unless it be wisdom or wit thy workmen to
chastise.
Revel not with ribalds, hear not their
tales,
And especially at meat such men eschew,
For they are the devil's Tale-Tellers, I let
thee understand."⁵⁰
"I assent, by Saint James," said the knight
then,
"To work by thy word, while my life en-
dureth."
"And I shall apparel me," quoth Perkin,
"in pilgrim's wise,
And wend with you the right way, till ye
Truth find."
He cast on his clothes, clouted and mended,
His garters and his cuffs, to keep his nails
from cold;
He hung a basket on his back, in stead of
a scrip;
A bushel of bread-corn he bringeth therein:
"For I will sow it myself, and then with
you wend.
For whoso helpeth me to plow, or do any
sort of labor,"⁶⁰
He shall have, by our Lord, the more hire
in harvest,
And shall make merry with the corn, who-
ever begrudgeth.
And all kinds of craftsmen that can live
with Truth,
I shall find them their food, if they faith-
fully live,
Save Jack the juggler, and Janet of the
stews,
And Robert the ribald, for his filthy words.
Truth taught it me once, and bade me tell
it further,
Deleantur de libro,¹ I should not deal with
them,
Holy Church is bound from them no tithe
to take;
*Et cum justis non scribantur*²
They have escaped by good luck;³ may
God amend them!"⁷⁰
Dame Work-when-there-is-time is the
name of Piers's wife;
His daughter is called Do-right-so-or-thy-
mother-will-beat-thee;

His son is called Suffer-thy-sovereigns-to-
have-their-will-
And-judge-them - not, - for-if-thou-do-thou-
shalt-dearly-pay-for-it.
"May God be with all, for so his word
teacheth;
For now I am old and gray, and have of
my own,
To penance and to pilgrimage I will pass
with these others.
Therefore I will, ere I wend, write my
testament.
In Dei nomine, amen. I make it myself.
He shall have my soul that best hath de-
served it,"⁸⁰
And defend it from the fiend, for so I believe,
Till I come to my account, as my creed me
tellet,
To have release and remission on that
rental I expect.
The church shall have my corpse, and keep
my bones;
For of my corn and capital she craveth the
tenth.
I paid her promptly, to save my soul from
peril,
She is bound, I hope, to bear me in mind,
And remember me in her memory among
all Christians.
My wife shall have what I won with
truth, and no more,
And divide with my friends and my dear
children;"⁹⁰
For though I die this day my debts are
cleared;
I bare home what I borrowed ere I to bed
went:
And with the residue and the remnant, by
the rood of Chester!
I will worship therewith Truth in my life,
And be his pilgrim at the plow, for poor
men's sake.
My plough-foot⁴ shall be my pikestaff and
push at the roots,
And help my coulter to carve and close the
furrows."
Now have Piers and the pilgrims to the
plow gone,
To plow this half-acre help him full many.
Ditchers and delvers dug up the ridges;⁵¹⁰⁰
Therewith was Perkin pleased, and praised
them gladly.

¹ "Let them be stricken out from the book [of the living]," *Psalms*, lxi, 28.

² "And let them not be written with the just." *Ibid.*

³ A *Thei ben a-scaped good thrift*.

⁴ A *plough-pote* (*pote* = pusher). B *plow-fote*; C *plough-fote*, plough-foot.

⁵ Left unplowed.

Other workmen there were that wrought
 full many,
 Each man in his manner made himself
 work;
 And sum, to please Perkin, picked up the
 weeds.
 At high prime¹ Perkin let the plough
 stand,
 While he himself oversaw who had best
 wrought;
 He should be hired thereafter, when har-
 vest-time came.
 Then sat some, and sang at the ale,
 And helped him to plow with "Hey, trolly-
 lolly!"
 "Now, by the Prince of Paradise," quoth
 Piers then in wrath,
 "Unless ye rise the sooner and haste ye to
 work,
 Shall no grain that here groweth gladden
 you at need,
 And though ye die for lack of it, the devil
 take him that cares!"
 Then were the rogues afraid and feigned
 themselves blind.
 Some laid their legs across as such scoun-
 drels can,
 And complained to Piers, with such piteous
 words:
 "For we have no limbs to labor with, our
 Lord we thank for it;
 But we pray for you, Piers, and for your
 plow too,
 That God of his grace our grain multiply,
 And reward you for your alms that ye give
 us here!"
 For we may neither work nor sweat, such
 sickness us aileth."
 "If it be truth that ye say," quoth Piers,
 "soon I shall spy it!"
 Ye be wasters, I wot, and Truth knows the
 sooth!
 I am his old servant, and ought him to warn
 What wasters in the world his workmen
 destroy.
 Ye eat what they should eat that plough
 for us all;
 But Truth shall teach you his team to drive,
 Both to sow and to set, and save his pro-
 duce,
 Scare crows from his corn, and keep his
 beasts,
 Or ye shall eat barley bread, and of the
 brook drink.

¹ Nine o'clock in the morning.

But if they be blind or broken-shanked, or
 bedridden lie,
 They shall have as good as I, so help me
 God,
 Till God of his grace cause them to arise.
 Anchorites and hermits that keep to their
 cells
 Shall have of my alms, all the while I live,
 Enough each day at noon, but no more till
 tomorrow,
 Lest the fiend and their flesh should defile
 their souls;
 Once at noon is enough for him that no
 work doeth,
 He abides in better state that tastes not too
 often."
 Then wasters arose, and would have
 fought;
 To Piers the Plowman one proffered his
 glove,
 A Breton, a braggart, boasted himself also,
 And bade him go hang with his plow, bald-
 headed wretch!
 "For we will have of thy flour, willy nilly,
 And take of thy meat when that us pleaseth,
 And make us merry therewith, spite of thy
 face!"
 Then Piers Plowman complained to the
 knight,
 To guard him as agreed from cursed
 wretches,
 From wasters that lie in wait winners to
 rob.
 Courteously the knight, as his nature
 was,
 Warned wasters and taught them to do
 better;
 "Or ye shall pay dearly by the law, by the
 order that I bear!"
 "I was not wont to work," quoth the waster,
 "I will not begin now!"
 And recked little of the law, and less of
 the knight,
 And counted Piers worth a pea, and his
 plow too,
 And menaced him and his men, when they
 should next meet.
 "Now by the peril of my soul," quoth Piers
 the Plowman,
 "I shall punish you all for your proud
 words!"
 And whooped after Hunger then, that heard
 him at once:
 "Wreak me on these wasters," quoth Piers,
 "that this world rob!"

Hunger in haste seized waster by the maw,
And wrung him so by the belly that both
his eyes watered,
And buffeted the Breton on both his
cheeks;

He looked like a lantern all his life after.
He so beat the boys he nigh burst their
ribs,

Had not Piers with a pease-loaf prayed him
to cease;

And with a bag¹ of beans beat them both,
And hit Hunger therewith between his lips,
And he bled inwards a bowlful of gruel;
Had not the physician first forbidden him
water 170

To moisten the barley-bread and the ground
beans,

They had been dead by this day, and buried
all warm.

Then rogues for fear flew to barns,
And laid on with flails, from morn till even,
So that Hunger was not hardy enough even
to look up

For a potful of pease that Piers had made.
A band of hermits seized hold of spades,
And delved in dirt and dung to drive Hun-
ger out.

Blind and bedridden were cured a thou-
sand,

That lie as blind and as broken-legged 180
Upon a warm Sunday by the highway;
Hunger killed them with a hot cake.

Lame men's limbs were rendered lithe that
time,

And they became herds, to keep Piers's
beasts,

And prayed, for charity, with Piers to
dwell,

All for craving of his corn, to cast out
Hunger.

Piers was proud thereof, and put them in
office,

And gave them meat and money, as they
might deserve.

Then had Piers pity, and prayed Hunger to
wend

Home to his own hearth,² and hold himself
there forever. 190

"And yet I pray thee," quoth Piers, "ere
thou pass hence,

With vagabonds and beggars what is best
to do?

I wot well, when thou art gone, they will
work full ill;

¹ A *bal*.

² A *hurde*, earth; B *erde*; C *erthe*.

It is misfortune maketh them to be now so
meek,

And for lack of food thus fast do they work;
And they are my blood brethren, for God
bought us all.

Truth taught me once to love them each
one,

And help them in all things, according as
they need.

Yet would I know if thou knewest what
were the best,

And how I might master them, and make
them work." 200

"Hear now," quoth Hunger, "and hold it
for wisdom.

Bold beggars and rascals that may earn
their meal by work,

With hound-bread and horse-bread hold up
their hearts,

And cheat them with bones³ against swell-
ing of their bellies;

And if the fellows grumble. bid them go
work,

And they shall sup the sweeter when they
have it deserved.

And if thou find any fellow that fortune
hath harmed

With fire or with false folk, try such to
know;

Comfort them with thy means, for Christ
of heaven's love.

Love them and lend to them, so the law of
nature wills. 210

And all manner of men, that thou mayest
spy,

That are needy, or naked, and nought have
to spend,

With meat or with money make them fare
the better,

With word or with work while thou art
here.

Make friends with such, for so Saint Mat-
thew teacheth,

*Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis.*⁴

"I would not grieve God," quoth Piers,
"for all the gold on ground;

Might I do as thou sayest without sin?"
said Piers then.

"Yea, I promise thee," quoth Hunger, "or
else the Bible lieth;

Go to Genesis the giant, the engenderer of
us alle;

³ A *banne hem with bones*; B *abate him with benes*;
C *a-bane hem with benes*.

⁴ Make for yourselves friends of the mammon of un-
righteousness, Luke, xvi, 9.

'In sweat and swink thou shalt earn thy meat,¹
 And labor for thy livelihood,' for so our lord ordered.
 And Sapience said the same, I saw it in the Bible.
*'Piger propter frigus,*² no field he till,
 He shall crave and beg, and no man abate his hunger.'
 Matthew of the man's face³ uttereth these words,
 'The unprofitable servant had a talent, and because he would not use it
 He had ill-will of his master evermore after';
*Auferte ab illo unam, et date illi, etc.,*⁴
 He took from him his talent, for he would not work,
 And gave it in haste to him that had ten before;
 And afterwards he thus said, his servants it heard,²³⁰
 'He that hath shall have, to help where need is,
 And he that hath not, nought shall have, nor no man help him;
 And he that hopeth to have, from him it shall be taken away.'
 For Common Sense would that each man should work,
 By teaching or by tillage, or travailing with hands,
 Active life or contemplative; Christ would so also.
 For so saith the Psalter, in the psalm beginning, 'Blessed is everyone,'
*Labores manum tuarum quia manducabis, etc.*⁵
 To him that gets his food here, with travailing in truth,
 God gives his blessing, for his livelihood that laboreth."
 "Yet I pray thee," quoth Piers, "for charity, if thou knowest
 Any leaf of leechcraft, let me learn it, my dear."
 For some of my servants are sick at times,

Work not for a week, so acheth their belly."
 "I wot well," quoth Hunger, "what sickness aileth them;
 They have eaten in excess, that maketh them groan oft.
 But I command thee," quoth Hunger, "if health thou desirest,
 That on no day thou drink till thou hast had some dinner;
 Eat not, I command thee, till Hunger take thee
 And send thee some of his sauce, the better to savor;
 Keep some till supper-time, and sit not too long,²⁵⁰
 Arise up ere appetite have eaten his fill.
 Let not Sir Surfeit sit at thy board;
 Love him not, for he is a lecher, and lewd of tongue,
 And after many meats his maw is a-longing.
 And if thou diet thyself thus, I dare bet both mine ears
 That Physic shall his furred hood for his food sell,
 And eke his Calabrian⁶ cloak with buttons of gold,
 And be fain, by my faith, his physic to leave,
 And learn to labor on the land, lest livelihood fail.
 There are more liars than leeches, our Lord them amend!²⁶⁰
 They do men to death by their drink, ere destiny would."
 "By Saint Paul," quoth Piers, "these be profitable words!
 This is a lovely lesson; our Lord reward thee for it!
 Away now when thou wilt; be it well with thee ever!"
 "I promise thee," quoth Hunger, "hence will I not wend
 Ere I have dined this day, and drunk too."
 "I have no penny," quoth Piers, "pullets to buy,
 Neither geese nor pigs, but two green⁷ cheeses.
 And a little curds and cream, and unleavened cake,
 And a loaf of beans and bran, baked for my children."²⁷⁰
 And I say, by my soul, I have no salt bacon,
 Nor any cook-boys, by Christ, collops to make.
⁶ Trimmed with grey Calabrian fur. ⁷ Fresh made.

¹ Genesis, iii, 19.

² The slothful shall not plow by reason of the winter, Proverbs, xx, 4.

³ "An allusion to a common representation of the evangelists which likens Matthew to a man, Mark to a lion, Luke to a bull, and John to an eagle." Skeat.

⁴ Take ye away the talent from him, and give to him, etc. Matthew, xxv, 28.

⁵ For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands, Psalms, cxxviii, 2.

But I have onions and parsley, and many
cabbages,
And eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare
To draw a-field my dung, while the drought
lasteth.

By these means must I live till Lammas
time;

By that time I hope to have harvest in my
croft;

Then may I prepare thee dinner as thou
dearly likest it.⁶

All the poor people pease-cods fetched,
Beans baked into bread they brought in
their laps, ²⁸⁰

Little onions their chief meat, and ripe
cherries many,

And proffered Piers this present, to please
his hunger with.

Hunger ate this in haste, and asked after
more.

Then these folk for fear fetched him many
Onions and pease, for they him would please;
After these were eaten, he must take his
leave

Till it was near to harvest, when new corn
came to market.

Then were these folk fain, and fed
Hunger eagerly

With good ale and gluttony, and caused
him to sleep.

And then would not the waster work, but
wandered about, ²⁹⁰

Nor any beggar eat bread that had beans
in it,

But coket and clearmatin,¹ and of clean
wheat;

Nor any halfpenny ale in any wise drink,
But of the best and the brownest that brew-
ers sell.

Laborers that have no land to live by,
but only their hands,

Deign not to dine today on yesterday's
vegetables.

No penny-ale may please them, nor a piece
of bacon,

Unless it were fresh flesh, or else fried fish,
Hot and very hot, lest they chill their
stomachs.

Unless he be hired at a high price, he will
surely chide, ³⁰⁰

Call curses on the time that he was made
a workman,

And curse the king hard, and all his council
after

¹ Kinds of fine bread.

For enforcing such laws as chastise la-
borers.

But while Hunger was master here there
would none chide

Nor strive against the statutes, so stern
they looked.

I warn you all, workmen, win while ye
may;

Hunger hitherward again hieth him in haste.
He will awake with high-waters² the

wasters all;

Ere five years are fulfilled, such famine shall
arise,

Through floods and foul weather fruits shall
fail; ³¹⁰

And so saith Saturn, and sendeth us warning.

PASSUS VIII

Truth heard tell hereof, and to Piers sent
To take his team, and till the earth;

And purchased him a pardon a *poena et a*
culpa,³

For him and for his heirs, for evermore
after.

And bade him stay at home, and plow his
leas,

And all that ever helped him, to plow or to
sow,

Or any kind of task that might Piers heip,
Part in that pardon the Pope hath granted.

Kings and knights that guard Holy
Church,

And rightfully rule the realm and the
people, ¹⁰

Have pardon through Purgatory to pass
full soon,

With patriarchs in Paradise to play there-
after.

Bishops that bless, and both the laws⁴
know,

Look on the one law and teach men the
other,

And bear them both on their backs, as their
banner showeth,

And preach to their parsons the peril of sin,
How their scabbed sheep shall their wool

save,

Have pardon with the Apostles when they
pass hence,

And at the Day of Doom with them on daïs
sit.

Merchants, in the margin, had many
years' remission, ²⁰

² Floods.

³ From punishment and guilt.

⁴ Duty to God and duty to man.

But not a *poena et a culpa* would the Pope
 them grant.
 Because they hold not their holy-day as
 Holy Church teacheth,
 And because they swore by their souls —
 “so help them God!” —
 Against their clean conscience, their goods
 to sell.
 But under his secret seal Truth sent a
 letter,
 And bade them buy boldly what they liked
 best,
 And then sell it again, and save the win-
 ning,
 And make *maison-dieux*¹ therewith, the sick
 to help,
 And wicked customs vigorously amend;
 Build again bridges that broken were, ³⁰
 Help to marry maidens or make them nuns;
 Poor widows that would not be wives again,
 Find such their food, for love of God of
 heaven;
 Let scholars to school, or to some other
 craft,
 Assist² religion, and endow it better;
 “And I shall send you myself Saint Michael,
 my angel,
 That no devil shall harm you, when you shall
 die,
 And hinder me from sending your souls safe
 into heaven,
 And before the face of my father prepare
 your seats.
 Usury and avarice and oaths I forbid, ⁴⁰
 That no guile go with you, but the grace of
 truth.”
 Then were merchants merry, they wept
 for joy,
 And give Will for his writing woollen
 clothes;
 Because he copied thus their clause, they
 gave him great thanks.
 Men of law had least, for they are loath
 To plead for mean men, unless they get
 money;
 So saith the Psalter and Sapience also.
*Super innocentes munera non accipiunt. A
 regibus et principibus erit merces
 eorum.*³
 From princes and prelates their pension
 should come,
 And from the poor people no pennyworth
 should they take.

¹ Hospitals.² *Psalms*, xv, 9.³ A Rule; B C *Releue*.

But he that spendeth his speech, and
 speaketh for the poor man, ⁵⁰
 Who is innocent and needy, and no man
 hath harmed,
 That comforteth him in misfortune, covet-
 eth not his goods,
 But, for our Lord's love, law for him
 showeth,
 No devil, at his death-day, shall harm him
 a mite,
 That he be not secure and safe; and so
 saith the Psalter.
*Qui facit haec, non movebitur in eternum.*⁴
 But to buy water, or wind, or wit (the third
 thing),
 Holy Writ would never grant, God knows
 the truth!
 These three as thralls have grown among
 us all,
 To wax or to wane, whichever God liketh.
 His pardon in purgatory is petty, I trow, ⁶⁰
 Who any pay from poor men for pleading
 receiveth.
 Ye lawmakers and lawyers, ye know
 whether I lie;
 Since ye see that it is so, serve at your best.
 Living laborers, that live by their hands,
 That truly give and truly pay their tithes
 And live in love and in law for their lowly
 hearts,
 Had the same absolution that sent was to
 Piers.
 Askers and beggars are not in the bull,
 Unless the suggestion be sound that causes
 them to beg.
 For he that beggeth or asketh, unless he
 have need, ⁷⁰
 He is false as the fiend, and defraudeth the
 needy,
 And also beguileth the giver, all against his
 will.
 They live not in love, nor any law keep;
 They wed no women that they have to do
 with;
 But as wild beasts wickedly work together,
 And bring forth bairns that bastards are
 held.
 Either their backs or their bones they
 break in their youth,
 And go begging with their children ever-
 more after.
 There are more misshapen among them,
 whoso takes heed,

⁴ He that doeth these things shall never be moved,
Psalms, xv, 5.

Than of all other men that in the world
wander. 80
They that live their life thus may loath the
time
That ever they were created men, when
they shall hence fare.
But old men and hoary, that helpless are
in strength,
And women with child, that cannot work,
The blind and bedridden, with broken limbs,
That take sickness meekly, like lepers and
others,
Have as full pardon as the Plowman him-
self;
For love of their humble hearts our Lord
hath them granted
Their penance and their purgatory to have
here upon earth.
"Piers," quoth a priest then, "thy par-
don must I read, 90
For I will construe every clause, and know
it in English."
And Piers, at his prayer, the pardon un-
foldeth,
And I, behind them both, beheld all the
bull.
In two lines it lay, and not a letter more,
And was written right thus, in witness of
truth:
*Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in viam eternam;
Qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.*¹
"Peter!" quoth the priest then, "I can no
pardon find,
But 'Do well and have well, and God shall
have thy soul;
And do evil and have evil, hope thou none
other
But that after thy death-day to hell shalt
thou wend!'"
And Piers, for pure vexation, pulled it
asunder, 100
And then he said to them these seemly
sayings:
"*Si ambulavero in medio umbræ mortis, non
timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es.*"²
I shall cease from my sowing," said Piers,
"and work not so hard,
Nor about my livelihood so busy be more!
In prayer and in penance my plowing shall
be hereafter,

And lower where I laughed, ere my life fail.
The prophet his bread ate in penance and
weeping;
As the Psalter says to us, so did many
others;
Who loveth God loyally, his livelihood is
plentiful:
*Fuerunt mihi lacrimæ meæ panes, die ac
nocte.*³
And, unless Luke lies, he teacheth us an-
other,
That too busy we should not be, here upon
earth, 110
While we dwell in this world, to make glad
the belly.
*Ne solliciti sitis,*⁴ he saith in his gospel,
And sheweth it by example our souls to
guide.
The fowls in the firmament, who feedeth
them in winter?
When the frost freezeth, food they require;
They have no granary to go to, yet God
gives them all."
"What?" quoth the priest to Perkin, "by
Peter! as methinketh,
Thou art lettered a little; who taught thee
to read?"
"Abstinence the abbess mine A B C me
taught,
And Conscience came after and showed me
better." 120
"Were thou a priest," quoth he, "thou
mightest preach when thou couldst;
'*Quoniam literaturam non cognovi,*'⁵ might
be thy theme!"
"Lewd losel!" quoth he, "little lookest
thou on the Bible,
Solomon's sayings seldom thou beholdest;
'Sling away these scornors,' he saith, 'with
their vile scolding,
For with them readily I care not to rest;'
Ejice derisores et jurgia cum eis, ne crescant."⁶
The priest and Perkin then disputed to-
gether,
And through their words I awoke, and
waited about,
And saw the sun in the south just at that
time. 129
Meatless and moneyless on Malvern hills,
Musing on this dream, a mile length I went.

¹ And those who did good shalt go into eternal life; but who did evil, into eternal fire. Cf. *Matthew*, xxv, 46.

² Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, *Psalms*, xxiii, 4.

³ My tears have been my meat day and night, *Psalms*, xlii, 3.

⁴ Be not anxious, etc., *Matthew*, vi, 25.

⁵ For I have known no learning, *Psalms*, lxxi, 15 (Vulgate).

⁶ *Proverbs*, xxii, 10 (translated in previous lines).

Many a time this dream has made me to study
 For love of Piers the Plowman, full pen-
 sive in my heart;
 For it I saw sleeping, if such a thing might
 be.
 But Cato construeth it nay, and the canon-
 lawyers too,
 And say themselves, "*Somnia ne cures.*"¹
 But as for the Bible, bear witness how
 Daniel divined the dreams of a king,
 Whom Nebuchadnezzar² these clerks name.
 Daniel said, "Sir King, thy dream means
 That strange knights shall come thy king-
 dom to claim;
 Among lower lords thy land shall be di-
 vided."¹⁴¹
 As Daniel divined, it fell out indeed after,
 The king lost his lordship, and lesser men
 it had.
 And Joseph dreamed dreams, full mar-
 velous also,
 How the sun and the moon and eleven stars
 Fell before his feet and saluted him all.
 "*Beau fils,*" quoth his father, "for famine
 we shall,
 I myself and my sons, seek thee in need."
 It fell out as the father said, in Pharaoh's
 time,¹⁵⁰
 Where Joseph was justice, Egypt to keep.
 All this maketh me on dreams to think
 Many a time at midnight, when men should
 sleep,
 On Piers the plowman, and what sort of
 pardon he had,
 And how the priest impugned it, all by pure
 reason,
 And divined that Do-well surpassed an in-
 dulgance,
 Bienals and trienals³ and bishops' letters.
 Do-well on doomsday is worthily praised,
 He surpasseth all the pardons of St. Peter's
 church.
 Now hath the Pope power pardon to grant,
 The people without penance to pass into
 joy.¹⁶¹

¹ Take no heed of dreams, Dionysius Cato, *Distich*,
 ii, 31.

² Really Belshazzar, as Skeat shows. *Daniel*, v, 28.

³ Masses for the dead said for two and three years.

This is a part of our belief as learned men
 teach us,
*Quodcunque ligaveris super terram, erit
 ligatum et in coelis.*⁴
 And so believe I loyally (our Lord forbid I
 should other)
 That pardon and penance and prayers do
 save
 Souls that have sinned seven times deadly.
 But to trust to trienals truly methinketh
 Is not so secure for the soul, certes, as Do-
 well.
 Therefore I counsel you men that are rich
 on earth,
 Trusting by your treasure trienals to have,
 Be ye none the bolder to break the ten com-
 mandments.¹⁷⁰
 And especially ye mayors, and ye master
 judges,
 That have the wealth of this world, and for
 wise men are held,
 To purchase pardon and the Pope's bulls,
 At the dreadful day of doom, when the dead
 shall arise
 And come all before Christ, and accounts
 yield
 How thou ledest thy life, and his law kept-
 est,
 What thou didst day by day, the doom will
 rehearse;
 A pouchful of pardon there, with provincial
 letters,
 Though thou be found in fraternity among
 the four orders,
 And have indulgence doubled, unless Do-
 well thee help,¹⁸⁰
 I would not give for thy pardon one pie-heel!
 Therefore I counsel all Christians to cry
 Christ mercy,
 And Mary his mother to be their intercessor,
 That God give us grace, ere we go hence,
 Such works to work, while we are here,
 That after our death-day, Do-well rehearse,
 At the day of doom, that we did as he us
 told.

*Explicit hic Visio Willelmi de Petro de
 Ploughman.*

⁴ What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be
 bound in heaven, *Matthew*, xviii, 18.

JOHN GOWER

THE TALE OF FLORENT¹

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. 1, l. 1407)

THER was whilom be daies olde
A worthi knyht, and as men tolde
He was nevoeu to themperour
And of his court a courteour:
Wifes he was, Florent he hihte;
He was a man that mochel myhte;²
Of armes he was desirous,
Chivalerous and amorous;
And for the fame of worldes speche,
Strange aventures forto seche,
He rod the Marches al aboute.
And fell a time, as he was oute,
Fortune, which may every thred
Tobreke and knette of mannes sped,³
Schop,⁴ as this knyht rod in a pas,⁵
That he be strengthe take was,
And to a castell thei him ladde,
Wher that he fewe frendes hadde:
For so it fell that ilke stounde
That he hath with a dedly wounde
Feihtende⁶ his oghne hondes slain
Branchus, which to the Capitain
Was sone and heir, wherof ben wrothe
The fader and the moder bothe.
That knyht Branchus was of his hond
The worthieste of al his lond,
And fain thei wolden do vengeance
Upon Florent; bot remembrance
That thei toke of his worthinesse
Of knyhtod and of gentillesse,
And how he stod of cousinage
To themperour, made hem assuage,
And dorsten noght slen him for fere:
In gret disputeisoun thei were
Among himself, what was the beste.
Ther was a lady, the slyheste
Of alle that men knewe tho,
So old sche myhte unethes go,⁷

And was grantdame unto the dede:⁸
And sche with that began to rede,
And seide how sche wol bringe him inne,
That sche schal him to dethe winne
Al only of his oghne grant,
Thurgh strengthe of verray covenant
Withoute blame of eny wiht.
Anon sche sende for this kniht,
And of hire sone sche alleide⁹
The deth, and thus to him sche seide:
'Florent, how so thou be to wyte¹⁰
Of Branchus deth, men schal respite
As now to take vengeance,
Be so thou stonde in juggement
Upon certein condicioun,
That thou unto a questioun
Which I schal axe schalt ansuere;
And over this thou schalt ek swere,
That if thou of the sothe faile,
Ther schal non other thing availe,
That thou ne schalt thi deth receive.
And for men schal the noght deceive,
That thou therof myht ben advised,
Thou schalt have day and tyme assised
And leve sauflly forto wende,
Be so that at thi daies ende
Thou come ayein with thin avys.'

This knyht, which worthi was and wys,
This lady preith that he may wite,
And have it under seales write,
What questioun it scholde be
For which he schal in that degree
Stonde of his lif in jeupartie.
With that sche feigneth compaignie,¹¹
And seith: 'Florent, on love it hongeth
Al that to myn axinge longeth:
What alle wommen most desire
This wole I axe, and in thempire
Wher as thou hast most knowlecheunge
Tak conseil upon this axinge.'
Florent this thing hath undertake,
The day was set, the time take,
Under his seal he wrot his oth,
In such a wise and forth he goth

¹ On the versions of this fine old story see G. H. Maynard's *Wife of Bath's Tale* in the *Grimm Library*, London, 1901.

² who could perform much.

³ Break asunder and restore again of man's luck.

⁴ Brought it about.

⁵ at a walk.

⁶ We should supply "with."

⁷ scarcely walk.

⁸ So old that she was grandam to persons already dead.

⁹ alleged.

¹⁰ punish.

¹¹ friendliness.

Home to his emes¹ court ayein;
 To whom his aventure plein
 He tolde, of that him is befall.
 And upon that thei weren alle
 The wiseste of the lond asent,²
 Bot natheles of on assent
 Thei myhte noght acorde plat,
 On seide this, an othere that.
 After the disposicioun
 Of naturel complexioun³
 To som womman it is plesance,
 That to an other is grevance;
 Bot such a thing in special,
 Which to hem alle in general
 Is most plesant, and most desired
 Above alle othere and most conspired,
 Such o thing conne thei noght finde
 Be constellacion ne kinde:
 And thus Florent withoute cure
 Mot stonde upon his aventure,
 And is al schape unto the lere,⁴
 As in defalte of his answer.
 This knyht hath levere forto dye
 Than breke his trowthe and forto lye
 In place ther as he was swore,
 And schaph him gon ayein therefore.
 Whan time cam he tok his leve,
 That lengere wolde he noght beleve,
 And preith his em he be noght wroth,
 For that is a point of his oth,
 He seith, that noman schal him wreke,
 Thogh afterward men hiere speke
 That he par aventure deie.
 And thus he wente forth his weie
 Alone as knyht aventurous,
 And in his thought was curious
 To wite what was best to do:
 And as he rod al one so,
 And cam nyh ther he wolde be,
 In a forest under a tre
 He syh wher sat a creature,
 A lothly wommannysch figure,
 That forto speke of fleisch and bon
 So foul yit syh he nevere non.
 This knyht behield hir redely,
 And as he wolde have passed by,
 Sche cleped him and bad abide;
 And he his horse heved aside,
 Tho torneth, and to hire he rod,
 And there he hoveth⁵ and abod,
 To wite what sche wolde mene.
 And sche began him to bemene,

And seide: 'Florent be thi name,
 Thou hast on honde such a game,
 That bot thou be the betre avised,
 Thi deth is schapen and devised,
 That al the world ne mai the save,
 Bot if that thou my conseil have.'
 Florent, whan he this tale herde,
 Unto this olde wyht answerde
 And of hir conseil he hir preide.
 And sche ayein to him thus seide:
 'Florent, if I for the so schape,
 That thou thurgh me thi deth ascape
 And take worschipe of thi dede,
 What schal I have to my mede?'
 'What thing,' quod he, 'that thou wolt axe.'
 'I bidde nevere a betre taxe,'⁶
 Quod sche; 'bot ferst, er thou be sped,
 Thou schalt me leve such a wedd,⁷
 That I wol have thi trowthe in honde
 That thou schalt be myn housebonde.'
 'Nay,' seith Florent, 'that may noght be.'
 'Ryd thanne forth thi wey,' quod sche,
 'And if thou go withoute red,
 Thou schalt be sekerliche ded.'
 Florent behihte hire good ynowh
 Of lond, of rente, of park, of plowh,
 Bot al that compteth sche at noght.
 Tho fell this knyht in mochel thought;
 Now goth he forth, now comth ayein,
 He wot noght what is best to sein,
 And thoughte, as he rode to and fro,
 That chese he mot on of the tuo —
 Or forto take hire to his wif
 Or elles forto lese his lif.
 And thanne he caste his avantage,
 That sche was of so gret an age,
 That sche mai live bot a while,
 And thoughte put hire in an ile,
 Wher that noman hire scholde knowe,
 Til sche with deth were overthrowe.
 And thus this yonge lusti knyht
 Unto this olde lothly wiht
 Tho seide: 'If that non other chance
 Mai make my deliverance,
 Bot only thilke same speche
 Which, as thou seist, thou schalt me teche,
 Have hier myn hond, I schal thee wedde.'
 And thus his trowthe he leith to wedde.
 With that sche frounceth⁸ up the browe:
 'This covenant I wol allowe.'
 Sche seith: 'if eny other thing
 Bot that thou hast of my techyng

¹ uncle's. Ger. Oheim.² sent for.³ disposition.⁴ delays.⁵ prepared for the loss.⁶ I ask no better engagement.⁷ pledge. Cf. *wedlock*, i.e. pledged state.⁸ wrinkles.

Fro deth thi body mai respite,
 I woll thee of thi trowthe acquite,
 And elles be non other weie.
 Now herkne me what I schal seie.
 Whan thou art come into the place,
 Wher now thei maken gret manace
 And upon thi comynge abyde,
 Thei wole anon the same tide
 Oppose¹ thee of thin answer.
 I wot thou wolt nothing forbere
 Of that thou wenest be thi beste,
 And if thou myht so finde reste,
 Wel is, for thanne is ther nomore.
 And elles this schal be my lore,
 That thou schalt seie, upon this molde
 That alle wommen lievest wolde
 Be sovereign of mannes love:
 For what womman is so above,
 Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille;
 And elles may sche noght fulfille
 What thing hir were lievest have.
 With this answer thou schalt save
 Thiself, and other wise noght.
 And whan thou hast thin ende wroght,
 Come hier ayein, thou schalt me finde,
 And let nothing out of thi minde.
 He goth him forth with hevychiere,
 As he that not in what manere
 He mai this worldes joie atteigne:
 For if he deie, he hath a peine,
 And if he live, he mot him binde
 To such on which of alle kinde
 Of wommen is thunsemlieste:
 Thus wot he noght what is the beste:
 Bot be him lief or be him loth,
 Unto the castell forth he goth
 His full answer for to yive,
 Or forto deie or forto live.
 Forth with his conseil cam the lord,
 The thinges stoden of record,
 He sende up for the lady sone,
 And forth sche cam, that olde mone.²
 In presence of the remenant
 The strengthe of al the covenant
 Tho was rehersed openly,
 And to Florent sche bad forthi
 That he schal tellen his avis,
 As he that woot what is the pris.
 Florent seith al that evere he couthe,
 Bot such word cam ther non to mowthe,
 That he for yifte or for behest
 Mihte eny wise his deth areste.
 And thus he tarieth longe and late,
 Til that this lady bad algate³

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That he schal for the dom final
 Yive his answer in special
 Of that sche hadde him first opposed:
 And thanne he hath trewly supposed
 That he him may of nothing yelpe,⁴
 Bot if so be the wordes helpe
 Whiche as the womman hath him tawht;
 Wherof he hath an hope cawht
 That he schal ben excused so,
 And tolde out plain his wille tho.
 And whan that this matrone herde
 The manere how this knyht ansuerde,
 Sche seide: 'Ha treson, wo thee be,
 That hast thus told the privite
 Which alle wommen most desire!
 I wolde that thou were afire.'
 Bot natheles in such a plit
 Florent of his answer is quit.
 And tho began his sorwe newe,
 For he mot gon, or ben untrewed,
 To hire which his trowthe hadde.
 Bot he, which alle schame dradde,
 Goth forth in stede of his penance,
 And takth the fortune of his chance,
 As he that was with trowthe affaited.⁵
 This olde wyht him hath awaited
 In place wher as he hire lefte:
 Florent his wofull heved⁶ upleste
 And syh this vecke⁷ wher sche sat,
 Which was the lothlieste what⁸
 That evere man caste on his yhe:
 Hire nase bass,⁹ hire browes hyhe,
 Hire yhen smale and depe set,
 Hire chekes ben with teres wet,
 And riven¹⁰ as an emty skyn
 Hangende down unto the chin;
 Hire lippes schrunken ben for age,
 Ther was no grace in the visage,
 Hir front was nargh,¹¹ hir lockes hore,
 Sche loketh forth as doth a More,¹²
 Hire necke is schort, hir schuldres courbe,¹³
 That myhte a mannes lust destourbe,
 Hire body gret and nothing smal,
 And schortly to describe hire al,
 Sche hath no lith¹⁴ withoute a lak;
 Bot lich unto the wollesak
 Sche proferth hire unto this knyht,
 And bad him, as he hath behyht,
 So as sche hath ben his warant,
 That he hire holde covenant,
 And be the bridel sche him seseth.
 Bot Godd wot how that sche him pleseth

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⁴ boast, speak.⁵ prepared.⁶ head.⁷ hag.⁸ thing.⁹ flat.¹⁰ wrinkle.¹¹ low.¹² Moor.¹³ bowed.¹⁴ limb.¹ Interrogate.² creature.³ in any case.

Of suche wordes as sche spekth:
Him thenkth welnyh his herte brekth
For sorwe that he may noght fle,
Bot if he wolde untrewhe be.

Loke, how a sek man for his hele
Takth baldemoine ¹ with canele, ²
And with the mirre takth the sucre,
Ryht upon such a maner lucre ³ 300
Stant Florent, as in this diete:
He drinkth the bitre with the swete,
He medleth sorwe with likynge,
And liveth, as who seith, ⁴ deyinge;
His youthe schal be cast aweie
Upon such on which as the weie ⁵
Is old and lothly overal.
Bot nede he mot that nede schal: ⁶
He wolde algate his trowthe holde,
As every knyht therto is holde, 310
What happ so evere him is befaller:
Thogh sche be the fouleste of alle,
Yet to thonour of wommanhiede
Him thoghte he scholde taken hiede;
So that for pure gentillesse,
As he hire couthe best adresce,
In ragges, as sche was totore, ⁷
He set hire on his hors tofore
And forth he takth his weie softe;
No wonder thogh he siketh ⁸ ofte. 320
Bot as an oule ⁹ fletch be nyhte
Out of alle othere briddes syhte,
Riht so this knyht on daies brode
In clos him hield, and schop his rode
On nyhtes time, til the tyde
That he cam there he wolde abide;
And prively withoute noise
He bringth this foule grete coise ¹⁰
To his castell in such a wise
That noman myhte hire schappe avise, 330
Til sche into the chambre cam:
Wher he his prive conseil nam
Of suche men as he most troste,
And tolde hem that he nedes moste
This beste wedde to his wif,
For elles hadde he lost his lif.

The prive women were asent, ¹¹
That scholden ben of his assent:
Hire ragges thei anon of drawe,
And, as it was that time lawe,
She hadde bath, sche hadde reste,
And was arraied to the beste. 340
Bot with no craft of combes brode
Thei myhte hire hore locks schode, ¹²

¹ gentian. ² cinnamon. ³ compensation. ⁴ so to speak. ⁵ road, common way. ⁶ he must needs who needs must. ⁷ all torn. ⁸ sigheth. ⁹ owl. ¹⁰ monster? ¹¹ sent for. ¹² part.

And sche ne wolde noght be schore ¹³
For no conseil, and thei therfore,
With such atyr as tho was used,
Ordeinen that it was excused,
And hid so crafteliche aboute, 350
That noman myhte sen hem oute.
Bot when sche was fullliche arraied
And hire atyr was al assaied,
Tho was sche foulere on to se:
Bot yit it may non other be,
Thei were wedded in the nyht;
So wo begon was nevere knyht
As he was thanne of mariage.
And sche began to pleie and rage,
As who seith, I am wel ynowh;
Bot he therof nothing ne lowh, ¹⁴ 360
For sche tok thanne chiere on honde
And clepeth him hire housebonde,
And seith, 'My lord, go we to bedde,
For I to that entente wedde,
That thou schalt be my worldes blisse:'
And profreth him with that to kisse,
As sche a lusti lady were.
His body myhte wel be there,
Bot as of thought and of memoire
His herte was in purgatoire. 370
Bot yit for strengthe of matrimoine
He myhte make non essoine, ¹⁵
That he ne mot algates plie ¹⁶
To gon to bedde of compaignie:
And whan thei were abed naked,
Withoute slep he was awaked;
He torneth on that other side,
For that he wolde hise yhen hyde
Fro lokynge on that foule wyht.
The chambre was al full of lyht, 380
The courtins were of cendal ¹⁷ thinne;
This newe bryd which lay withinne,
Thogh it be noght with his acord,
In armes sche beclipte hire lord,
And preide, as he was torned fro,
He wolde him torne ayeinward tho;
'For now,' sche seith, 'we ben both on.'
And he lay still as eny ston,
Bot evere in on ¹⁸ sche spak and preide,
And bad him thenke on that he seide, 390
Whan that he tok hire be the hond.
He herde and understod the bond,
How he was set to his penance,
And as it were a man in trance
He torneth him al sodeinly,
And syh a lady lay him by
Of eyhtetiene wynter age,

¹³ shorn. ¹⁴ laughed. ¹⁵ excuse. ¹⁶ submit. ¹⁷ silk. ¹⁸ continuously.

Which was the faireste of visage
That ever in al this world he syh :
And as he wolde have take hire nyh,
Sche put hire hand and be his leve,
Besoghte him that he wolde leve,
And seith that for to wynne or lese
He mot on of tuo thinges chese,
Wher¹ he wol have hire such on nyht,
Or elles upon daies lyht,
For he schal noght have bothe tuo.
And he began to sorwe tho,
In many a wise and caste his thoght,
Bot for al that yit cowthe he noght
Devise himself which was the beste.
And sche, that wolde his hertes reste,
Preith that he sholde chese algate,
Til ate laste longe and late
He seide: 'O ye, my lyves hele,
Sey what you list in my querele,
I not what ansuere I shal yive:
Bot evere whil that I may live,
I wol that ye be my maistresse,
For I can noght miselve gesse
Which is the beste unto my chois.
Thus grante I yow myn hole vois,
Ches for ous bothen, I you preie;
And what as evere that ye seie,
Riht as ye wole so wol I.'

'Mi lord,' sche seide, 'grant merci,
For of this word that ye now sein,
That ye have mad me soverein,
Mi destine is overpassed,
That never hierafter schal be lassed²
Mi beaute, which that I now have,
Til I be take into my grave;
Bot nyht and day as I am now
I schal alwey be such to yow.
The kinges dowhter of Cizile³
I am, and fell bot siththe⁴ awhile,
As I was with my fader late,
That my stepmoder for an hate,
Which toward me sche hath begonnde,
Forschop⁵ me, til I hadde wonne
The love and sovereinete
Of what knyht that in his degre
Alle othre passeth of good name:
And, as men sein, ye ben the same,
The dede proeveth it is so;
Thus am I yours evermo.'
Tho was plesance and joye ynowh,
Echon with other pleide and lowh;
Thei live longe and wel thei ferde,
And clerkes that his chance herde

Thei writen it in evidence,
To teche how that obedience
Mai wel fortune a man to love
And sette him in his lust above,
As it befell unto this knyht.

TALE OF ALBINUS AND
ROSEMUND⁶

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. 1, l. 2459)

Of hem that we Lombars⁷ now calle
Albinus was the ferste of alle
Which bar corone of Lombardie,
And was of gret chivalerie
In werre ayein diverse kinges.
So fell amonges othre thinges,
That he that time a werre hadde
With Gurmond, which the Geptes ladde,
And was a myhti kyng also:
Bot natheles it fell him so,
Albinus slowh him in the feld,
Ther halp him nowther sward ne scheld,
That he ne smot his hed of thanne,
Wherof he tok away the panne,⁸
Of which he seide he wolde make
A cuppe for Gurmoundes sake,
To kepe and drawe into memoire
Of his bataille the victoire.
And thus whan he the feld hath wonne,
The lond anon was overronne
And sesed in his oghne hond,
Wher he Gurmondes dowhter fond,
Which Maide Rosemounde hihte,
And was in every mannes sihte
A fair, a freissh, a lusti on.
His herte fell to hire anon,
And such a love on hire he caste,
That he hire weddeth ate laste;
And after that long time in reste
With hire he duelte, and to the beste
Thei love ech other wonder wel.
Bot sche which kepeth the blinde whel,
Venus, whan thei be most above,
In al the hoteste of here love,
Hire whiel sche torneth, and thei felle
In the manere as I schal telle.

This king, which stod in al his welthe
Of pes, of worschipe and of helthe,
And felte him on no side grieved,
As he that hath his world achieved,

⁶ Gower has much enlarged upon his probable source, the twelfth century *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo.
⁷ Lombards. ⁸ skull.

¹ whether. ² lessened. ³ Sicily. ⁴ since.
⁵ transformed.

Tho thoughte he wolde a feste make;
 And that was for his wyves sake,
 That sche the lordes ate feste,
 That were obeissant to his heste,
 Mai knowe: and so forth therupon
 He let ordeine, and sende anon
 Be lettres and be messagiers,
 And warnede alle hise officiers
 That every thing be wel arraied:
 The grete stiedes were assaied
 For joustinge and for tornement,
 And many a perled garnement
 Embroudred was ayein the dai.
 The lordes in here beste arrai
 Be comen ate time set;
 On jousteth wel, an other bet,¹
 And otherwhile thei torneie,
 And thus thei casten care aweie
 And token lustes upon honde.
 And after, thou schalt understonde,
 To mete into the kinges halle
 Thei come, as thei be beden alle:
 And whan thei were set and served,
 Thanne after, as it was deserved,
 To hem that worthi knyghtes were,
 So as thei seten hiere and there,
 The pris was yove² and spoken oute
 Among the heraldz al aboute.
 And thus benethe and ek above
 Al was of armes and of love,
 Wherof abouten ate bordes
 Men hadde manye sondri wordes,
 That of the merthe which thei made
 The king himself began to glade
 Withinne his herte and tok a pride,
 And sih³ the cuppe stonde aside,
 Which mad was of Gurmoundes hed,
 As ye have herd, whan he was ded,
 And was with gold and riche stones
 Beset and bounde for the nones,
 And stod upon a fot on heihte
 Of burned gold, and with gret sleiht
 Of werkmanshipe it was begrave
 Of such werk as it scholde have,
 And was policed⁴ ek so elene
 That no signe of the skulle is sene,
 Bot as it were a gripes ey.⁵
 The king bad bere his cuppe away,
 Which stod tofore him on the bord,
 And fette thilke.⁶ Upon his word
 This skulle is fet and wyn therinne,
 Wherof he bad his wif beginne:
 'Drink with thi fader, Dame,' he seide.

And sche to his biddinge obeide,
 And tok the skulle, and what hire liste
 Sche drank, as sche which nothing wiste
 What cuppe it was: and thanne al oute
 The kyng in audience aboute
 Hath told it was hire fader⁷ skulle,
 So that the lordes knowe schulle
 Of his bataille a soth wisesse,
 And made avant thurgh what prouesse
 He hath his wyves love wonne,
 Which of the skulle hath so begonne.
 Tho was ther mochel pride alofte,
 Thei speken alle; and sche was softe,
 Thinkende on thilke unkynde⁸ pride,
 Of that hire lord so nyh hire side
 Avanteth him that he hath slain
 And piked out hire fader brain,
 And of the skulle had mad a cuppe.
 Sche soffreth al til thei were uppe,
 And tho sche hath seknesse feigned,
 And goth to chambre and hath compleigned
 Unto a maide which sche triste,⁹
 So that non other wyht it wiste.
 This mayde Glodeside is hote,¹⁰
 To whom this lady hath behote¹¹
 Of ladischipe al that sche can,
 To vengen hire upon this man,
 Which dede hire drinke in such a plit¹²
 Among hem alle for despit
 Of hire and of hire fader bothe;
 Wherof hire thoghtes ben so wrothe,
 Sche seith, that sche schal noght be glad,
 Til that sche se him so bestad
 That he nomore make avant.
 And thus thei felle in covenant,
 That thei acorden ate laste,
 With suche wiles as thei caste
 That thei wol gete of here acord
 Som orped¹³ knyht to sle this lord:
 And with this sleighte thei beginne,
 How thei Helmege myhten winne,
 Which was the kinges boteler,¹⁴
 A proud, a lusti bachelor,
 And Glodeside he loveth hote.
 And sche, to make him more assote,¹⁵
 Hire love granteth, and be nyhte
 Thei schape how thei togedre myhte
 Abedde meete: and don it was
 This same nyht; and in this cas
 The qwene hirself the nyht secounde
 Wente in hire stede, and there hath founde
 A chambre derk withoute liht,

¹ better. ² given. ³ saw. ⁴ polished.
⁵ griffin's or vulture's egg. ⁶ fetch that other.

⁷ The old possessive form. ⁸ unnatural. ⁹ trusted.
¹⁰ called. ¹¹ promised. ¹² manner. ¹³ valiant.
¹⁴ butler. ¹⁵ doting.

And goth to bedde to this knyht.
 And he, to kepe his observance,
 To love doth his obeissance,
 And weneth it be Glodeside;
 And sche thanne after lay aside,
 And axeth him what he hath do,
 And who sche was sche tolde him tho,
 And seide: 'Helmege, I am thi qwene
 Now schal thi love wel be sene
 Of that thou hast thi wille wrought:
 Or it schal sore ben aboght,
 Or thou schalt worche as I thee seie.
 And if thou wolt be such a weie
 Do my plesance and holde it stille,
 For evere I schal ben at thi wille,
 Bothe I and al myn heritage.'
 Anon the wylde loves rage,
 In which noman him can governe,
 Hath mad him that he can noght werne,¹
 Bot fell al hol to hire assent:
 And thus the whiel is al miswent,
 The which fortune hath upon honde;
 For how that evere it after stonde,
 Thei schope among hem such a wyle,
 The king was ded withinne a whyle.
 So slihly cam it noght aboute
 That thei ne ben discovered oute,
 So that it thoghte hem for the beste
 To fle, for there was no reste:
 And thus the tresor of the king
 Thei trusse² and mochel other thing,
 And with a certain felaschipe
 Thei fiedde and wente away be schipe,
 And hielde here rihte cours fro thenne,
 Til that thei come to Ravenne,
 Wher thei the Dukes helpe soghte.
 And he, so as thei him besoghte,
 A place granteth forto duellie;
 Bot after, whan he herde telle
 Of the manere how thei have do,
 This Duk let schape for hem so,
 That of a puison which thei drunke
 Thei hadden that thei have beswunke.³
 And al this made avant⁴ of Pride:
 Good is therefore a man to hide
 His oghne pris, for if he speke,
 He mai lihtliche his thonk tobreke.⁵
 In armes lith non avantance
 To him which thenkth his name avance
 And be renommed of his dede:
 And also who that thenkth to spede
 Of love, he mai him noght avaunte;
 For what man thilke vice haunte,

His pourpos schal fulofte faile.
 In armes he that wol travaile
 Or elles loves grace atteigne,
 His lose⁶ tunge he mot restreigne,
 Which berth of his honour the keie.⁷

THE TALE OF CONSTANTINE AND SILVESTER

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. II, l. 3187)

AMONG the bokes of Latin⁸
 I finde write of Constantin
 The worthi Emperour of Rome,
 Suche infortunes to him come,
 Whan he was in his lusti age,
 The lepre⁹ cawhte in his visage
 And so forth overal aboute,
 That he ne mihte ryden oute:
 So lefte he bothe schield and spere,
 As he that mihte him noght bestere,
 And held him in his chambre clos.
 Thurgh al the world the fame aros,
 The grete clerkes ben asent
 And come at his comandement
 To trete upon this lordes hele.¹⁰
 So longe thei togedre dele,
 That thei upon this medicine
 Apointen hem, and determine
 That in the maner as it stod
 Thei wolde him bathe in childes blod
 Withinne sevene wynter age:
 For, as thei sein, that scholde assuage
 The lepre and al the violence,
 Which that thei knewe of accidenece
 And noght be weie of kinde¹¹ is falle.
 And therto thei acorden alle
 As for final conclusioun,
 And tolden here opinioun
 To themperour: and he anon
 His conseil tok, and therupon
 With letres and with seales oute
 Thei sende in every lond aboute
 The yonge children forto seche,
 Whos blod, thei seiden, schal be leche
 For themperoures maladie.
 Ther was ynowh to wepe and crie
 Among the modres, whan thei herde
 Hou wofully this cause ferde,
 Bot natheles thei moten bowe;
 And thus wommen ther come ynowhe¹²

¹ refuse. ² pack up. ³ labored for, earned.
⁴ boast. ⁵ lose his reward.

⁶ loose. ⁷ key. ⁸ These could be lives of Saint
 Silvester. See Macaulay's note. ⁹ leprosy. ¹⁰ health.
¹¹ by mere chance, and not in the reasonable course of
 nature.

With children soukende on the tete.
 Tho was ther manye teres lete;
 Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,
 The wommen and the children bothe
 Into the paleis forth he broght
 With many a sory hertes thought
 Of hem whiche of here bodi bore
 The children hadde, and so forlore
 Withinne a while scholden se.
 The modres wepe in here degre,
 And manye of hem aswouned falle,
 The yonge babes criden alle:
 This noyse aros, the lord it herde,
 And lokod out, and how it ferde
 He sih, and as who seith ¹ abreide ²
 Out of his slep, and thus he seide:
 'O thou divine pourveance,
 Which every man in the balance
 Of kinde hast formed to be liche,
 The povere is bore as is the riche
 And deieth in the same wise;
 Upon the fol, upon the wise
 Siknesse and hele entrecomune; ³
 Mai non eschuie that fortune
 Which kinde hath in hire lawe set;
 Hire strengthe and beaute ben beset
 To every man aliche fre,
 That sche preferreth no degre
 As in the disposicioun
 Of bodili complexioun:
 And ek of soule resonable
 The povere child is bore als able
 To vertu as the kinges sone;
 For every man his oghne wone ⁴
 After the lust of his assay
 The vice or vertu chese may.
 Thus stonden alle men franchised,
 Bot in astat thei ben divided;
 To some worschipe and richesse,
 To some poverté and distresse,
 On lordeth and an other serveth;
 Bot yit as every man deserveth
 The world yifth noght his yiftes hiere.
 Bot certes he hath gret matiere
 To ben of good condicioun,
 Which hath in his subjeccioun
 The men that ben of his semblance.'
 And ek he tok a remembrance
 Howe he that made lawe of kinde
 Wolde every man to lawe binde,
 And bad a man, such as he wolde
 Toward himself, riht such he scholde
 Toward an other don also.
 And thus this worthi lord as tho

Sette in balance his oghne astat
 And with himself stod in debat,
 And thoughte hou that it was noght good
 To se so mochel mannes blod
 Be spilt for cause of him alone.
 He sih also the grete mone, 100
 Of that the modres were unglade,
 And of the wo the children made,
 Wherof that al his herte tendreth,
 And such pite withinne engendreth,
 That him was levere forto chese
 His oghne bodi forto lese,
 Than se so gret a moerdre wrought
 Upon the blod which gulteth noght. ⁵
 Thus for the pite which he tok
 Alle othre leches he forsok, 110
 And put him out of aventure
 Al only into Goddes cure;
 And seith, 'Who that woll maister be,
 He mot be servant to pite.'
 So ferforth he was overcome
 With charite, that he hath nome ⁶
 His conseil and hise officers,
 And bad unto hise tresorers
 That thei his tresour al aboute
 Departe among that povere route 120
 Of wommen and of children bothe,
 Wherof thei mihte hem fede and clothe
 And sauffi tornen hom ayein
 Withoute lost of eny grein.
 Thurgh charite thus he despendeth
 His good, wherof that he amendeth
 The povere poeple, and contrevailleth
 The harm, that he hem so travaileth;
 And thus the woful nyhtes sorwe
 To joie is torned on the morwe; 130
 Al was thinkinge, al was blessinge,
 Which erst was wepinge and cursinge;
 Thes wommen gon hom glade ynowh,
 Echon for joie on other lowh, ⁷
 And preiden for this lordes hele,
 Which hath releessed the querele,
 And hath his oghne will forsake
 In charite for Goddes sake.
 Bot now hierafter thou schalt hiere
 What God hath wrought in this matiere, 140
 As he which doth al equite.
 To him that wroughte charite
 He was ayeinward ⁸ charitous,
 And to pite he was pitous:
 For it was nevere knowe yit
 That charite goth unauquit.
 The nyht, whan he was leid to slepe,
 The hihe God, which wolde him kepe,
 Is not guilty, ⁹ taken. ⁷ laughed. ⁸ in return.

¹ as it were. ² started. ³ intermix. ⁴ custom.

Seint Peter and seint Poul him sende,
 Be whom he wolde his lepre amende. 150
 Thei tuo to him slepende appiere
 Fro God, and seide in this manere:
 'O Constantin, for thou hast served
 Pite, thou hast pite deserved:
 Forthi thou schalt such pite have
 That God thurgh pite woll thee save.
 So schalt thou double hele finde,
 Ferst for thi bodiliche kinde,
 And for thi wofull soule also,
 Thou schalt ben hol of bothe tuo. 160
 And for thou schalt thee noght despire,
 Thi lepre schal nomore empeire ¹
 Til thou wolt sende therupon
 Unto the Mont of Celion,
 Wher that Silvestre and his clergie
 Togedre duelle in compaignie
 For drede of thee, which many day
 Hast ben a fo to Cristes lay.²
 And hast destruid to mochel schame
 The prechours of his holy name. 170
 Bot now thou hast somdiel appesed
 Thi God, and with good dede plesed,
 That thou thi pite hast bewared ³
 Upon the blod which thou hast spared.
 Forthi to thi salvacion
 Thou schalt have enformacioun,
 Such as Silvestre schal the teche:
 The nedeth of non other leche.
 This Emperour, which al this herde,
 'Grant merci, lordes,' he ansuerde, 180
 'I wol do so as ye me seie.
 Bot of o thing I wolde preie:
 What schal I telle unto Silvestre
 Or of youre name or of youre estre?' ⁴
 And thei him tolden what thei hihte,
 And forth withal out of the sihte
 Thei passen up into the hevene.
 And he awok out of his swevene,⁵
 And clepeth, and men come anon:
 He tolde his drem, and therupon 190
 In such a wise as he hem telleth
 The mont wher that Silvestre duelleth
 Thei have in alle haste soght,
 And founde he was and with hem broght
 To temperour, which to him tolde
 His swevene and elles that he wolde.
 And whan Silvestre hath herd the king,
 He was riht joiful of this thing,
 And him began with al his wit
 To techen upon holi writ 200
 Ferst how mankinde was forlore,

And how the hihe God therfore
 His Sone sende from above,
 Which bore was for mannes love,
 And after of his oghne chois
 He tok his deth upon the crois;
 And how in grave he was beloke,⁶
 And how that he hath helle broke,
 And tok hem out that were him lieve;⁷
 And forto make ous full believe 210
 That he was verrai Goddes Sone,
 Ayein the kinde of mannes wone ⁸
 Fro dethe he ros the thridle day,
 And whanne he wolde, as he wel may,
 He styh ⁹ up to his fader evene
 With fleissch and blod into the hevene;
 And riht so in the same forme
 In fleissch and blod he schal reforme,
 Whan time comth, the qwike and dede
 At thilke woful dai of drede, 220
 Where every man schal take his dom,
 Als wel the maister as the grom.
 The mihti kinges retenue
 That dai may stonde of no value
 With worldes strengthe to defende;
 For every man mot thanne entende
 To stonde upon his oghne dedes
 And leve all othre mennes nedes.
 That dai mai no consail availle,
 The pledour and the plee schal faille, 230
 The sentence of that ilke day
 Mai non appell sette in delay;
 Ther mai no gold the juggle plie,¹⁰
 That he ne schal the sothe trie
 And setten every man upriht,
 Als wel the plowman as the kniht:
 The lewed man, the grete clerk
 Schal stonde upon his oghne werk,
 And such as he is founde tho,
 Such schal he be for evermo. 240
 Ther mai no peine be relessed,
 Ther mai no joie ben encessed,
 Bot endeles, as thei have do,
 He schal receive on of the tuo.
 And thus Silvestre with his sawe
 The ground of al the newe lawe
 With gret devocioun he precheth,
 Fro point to point and plainly techeth
 Unto this hethen Emperour;
 And seith, the hihe creatour 250
 Hath underfonge ¹¹ his charite,
 Of that he wroghte such pite,
 Whan he the children hadde on honde.
 Thus whan this lord hath understonde

¹ grow worse. ³ faith. ⁵ showed.
⁴ abode. ⁶ dream.

⁶ shut up. ⁷ dear to him. ⁸ custom.
⁹ ascended. ¹⁰ bend, move. ¹¹ received.

Of al this thing how that it ferde,
Unto Silvestre he thanne anserde,
With al his hole herte and seith
That he is redi to the feith.

And so the vessel which for blod
Was mad, Silvestre, ther it stod,
With clene water of the welle
In alle haste he let do felle,
And sette Constantin therinne
Al naked up unto the chinne.
And in the while it was begunne,
A liht, as thogh it were a sunne,
Fro hevene into the place com
Wher that he tok his christendom;¹
And evere among the holi tales
Lich as thei weren fisshes skales
Ther fellen from him now and eft,²
Til that ther was nothing beleft
Of al his grete maladie.

For he that wolde him purefie,
The hihe God hath mad him clene,
So that ther lefte nothing sene;
He hath him clensed bothe tuo,
The bodi and the soule also.

Tho knew this Emperour in dede
That Cristes feith was forto drede,
And sende anon hise lettres oute
And let do crien al aboute,
Up peine of deth that noman weyve³
That he baptesme ne receive:
After his moder qweene Heleine
He sende, and so betwen hem tweine
Thei treten, that the cite all
Was cristned, and sche forth withall.

This Emperour, which hele hath founde,

Withinne Rome anon let founde
Tuo cherches, whiche he dede make

For Peter and for Poules sake,
Of whom he hadde avisioun;

And yaf therto possessioun
Of lordschipe and of worldes good.

Bot how so that his will was good
Toward the Pope and his franchise,

Yit hath it proved other wise,
To se the worching of the dede:

For in cronique this I rede;

Anon as he hath mad the yifte,

A vois was herd on hih the lifte,⁴

Of which al Rome was adrad,

And seith: 'To day is venym schad

In holi cherche of temporal,

Which medleth with the spirital.'

And hou it stant of that degree

Yit mai a man the sothe se:
God mai amende it, whan he wile,
I can ther to non other skile.⁵

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THE TALE OF ROSIPHELEE⁶

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. IV, l. 1245)

OF Armenye, I rede thus,
Ther was a king, which Herupus
Was hote,⁷ and he a lusti maide
To dowhter hadde, and as man saide
Hire name was Rosiphelee;

Which tho was of gret renomee,
For sche was bothe wys and fair

And scholde ben hire fader hair.⁸

Bot sche hadde o defalte of slowthe
Towardes love, and that was rowthe;⁹

For so wel cowde noman seie,
Which mihte sette hire in the weie

Of loves occupacioun

Thurgh non ymaginacion;

That scole wolde sche noght knowe.

And thus sche was on of the slowe

As of such hertes besnesse,

Til whanne Venus the goddesse,

Which loves court hath forto reule,

Hath broght hire into betre reule,

Forth with Cupide and with his miht:

For thei mervelle how such a wiht,

Which tho was in hir lusti age,

Desireth nother mariage

Ne yit the love of paramours,

Which evere hath be the comun cours

Amonges hem that lusti were.

So was it schewed after there:

For he that hihe hertes loweth

With fyr dartes whiche he throweth,

Cupide, which of love is godd,

In chastisinge hath mad a rodd

To dryve awei hir wantounesse;¹⁰

So that withinne a while, I gesse,

Sche hadde on such a chance sporned,¹¹

That al hire mod was overturned,

Which first sche hadde of slow manere:

For thus it fell, as thou schalt hiere.

Whan come was the monthe of Maii,

Sche wolde walke upon a dai,

And that was er the sonne ariste;¹²

Of wommen bot a fewe it wiste,

40

⁵ reason.

⁶ For other versions of this widespread story, see *Romania*, Jan., 1900, an article on the "Purgatory of Cruel Beauties," by W. A. Neilson.

⁷ called.

⁸ father's heir.

⁹ a pity.

¹⁰ insubordination.

¹¹ stumbled.

¹² sun's rising.

¹ Christian baptism.

² again.

³ hesitate.

⁴ sky.

And forth sche wente prively
 Unto the park was faste by,
 Al softe walkende on the gras,
 Til sche cam ther the launde was,
 Thurgh which ther ran a gret rivere.
 It thoghte¹ hir fair, and seide, 'Here
 I wole abide under the schawe':²
 And bad hire wommen to withdrawe,
 50 And ther sche stod al one stille,
 To thanke what was in hir wille.
 Sche sih the swote floures springe,
 Sche herde glade foules singe,
 Sche sih the bestes in her kinde,
 The buck, the do, the hert, the hinde,
 The madle³ go with the femele;
 And so began ther a querele
 Betwen love and hir oghne herte,
 Fro which sche couthe noght asterte.
 60 And as sche caste hire yhe aboute,
 Sche syh clad in o suite a route
 Of ladis, wher thei comen ryde
 Along under the wodes syde:
 On faire amblende hors thei sete,
 That were al whyte, fatte and grete,
 And everichon thei ride on side.⁴
 The sadles were of such a pride,
 With perle and gold so wel begon,⁵
 So riche syh sche nevere non;
 70 In kertles and in copes⁶ riche
 Thei weren clothed, alle liche,
 Departed evene of whyt and blew;
 With alle lustes that sche knew
 Thei were enbrouded overal.
 Here bodies weren long and smal,
 The beaute faye⁷ upon here face
 Non erthly thing it may desface;
 Coronas on here hed thei beere,
 As ech of hem a qweene weere,
 80 That al the gold of Cresus halle
 The leste coronel of alle
 Ne mihte have boght after the worth:
 Thus come thei ridende forth.

The kinges dowhter, which this syh,
 For pure abaisht⁸ drowh hire adryh⁹
 And hield hire clos under the bowh,
 And let hem passen stille ynowh;
 For as hire thoghte in hire avis,
 To hem that were of such a pris
 Sche was noght worthi axen there
 Fro when they come or what thei were:
 Bot levere than this worldes good
 Sche wolde have wist hou that it stod,

And putte hire hed alitel oute;
 And as sche lokede hire aboute,
 Sche syh comende under the linde¹⁰
 A womman up an hors behinde.
 The hors on which sche rod was blak,
 100 Al lene and galled on the back,
 And haltede, as he were encluyed,¹¹
 Whereof the womman was annued;¹²
 Thus was the hors in sori split,
 Bot for al that a sterre whit
 Amiddes in the front he hadde.
 Hir sadel ek was wonder badde,
 In which the wofull womman sat,
 And natheles ther was with that
 A riche bridel for the nones
 Of gold and preciouise stones.
 110 Hire cote was somdiel totore;¹³
 Aboute hir middel twenty score
 Of horse haltres and wel mo
 Ther hyngen ate time tho.

Thus whan sche cam the ladi nyh,
 Than tok sche betre hiede and syh
 This womman fair was of visage,
 Freysssh, lusti, yong and of tendre age;
 And so this ladi, ther sche stod,
 Bethoghte hire wel and understod
 120 That this, which com ridende tho,
 Tidinges couthe telle of tho
 Which as sche sih tofore ryde,
 And putte hir forth and preide abide,
 And seide, 'Ha, suster, let me hiere,
 What ben thei, that now riden hiere,
 And ben so richeliche arraied?'¹⁴

This womman, which com so esmaied,¹⁵
 Ansuerde with ful softe speche,
 And seith, 'Ma dame, I schal you teche.
 130 These ar of tho that whilom were
 Servantz to love, and trowthe beere,
 Ther as thei hadde here herte set.
 Fare wel, for I mai noght be let:¹⁶
 Ma dame, I go in mi servise,
 So moste I haste in alle wise;
 Forthi, ma dame, yif me leve,
 I mai noght longe with you leve.'
 'Ha, goode soster, yit I preie,
 Tell me whi ye ben so beseie¹⁷
 140 And with these haltres thus begon.'¹⁸
 'Ma dame, whilom I was on
 That to mi fader hadde a king;
 Bot I was slow, and for no thing
 Me liste noght to love obeie,
 And that I now ful sore abei.¹⁹

¹ seemed. ² leafy shade. ³ male. ⁴ side-saddle, probably. ⁵ decorated. ⁶ mantles. ⁷ fairly. Many MSS. read *faire*. ⁸ for very diffidence. ⁹ aside.

¹⁰ linden. ¹¹ had a nail in his foot. ¹² distressed. ¹³ somewhat torn. ¹⁴ dismayed. ¹⁵ delayed. ¹⁶ arrayed. ¹⁷ furnished. ¹⁸ pay for.

For I whilom no love hadde,
 Min hors is now so fieble and badde,
 And al tofore is myn arai,
 And every yeer this freisshe Maii 150
 These lusti ladis ryde aboute,
 And I mot nedes suie¹ here route
 In this manere as ye now se,
 And truse here haltres forth with me,
 And am bot as here horse knave.
 Non other office I ne have,
 Hem thenkth I am worthi nomore,
 For I was slow in loves lore,
 Whan I was able forto lere,
 And wolde noght the tales hiere 160
 Of hem that couthen love teche.
 'Now tell me thanne, I you beseche,
 Wherof that riche bridel serveth.'
 With that hire chere awei sche swerveth,²
 And gan to wepe, and thus sche tolde:
 'This bridel, which ye nou beholde
 So riche upon myn horse hed, —
 Ma dame, afore, er I was ded,
 Whan I was in mi lusti lif,
 Ther fel into myn herte a strif 170
 Of love, which me overcom,
 So that therafter hiede I nom³
 And thoghte I wolde love a kniht:
 That laste wel a fourtenyht,
 For it no lengere mihte laste,
 So nyh my lif was ate laste.
 Bot now, allas, to late war
 That I ne hadde him loved ar:⁴
 For deth cam so in haste bime,⁵
 Er I therto hadde eny time, 180
 That it ne mihte ben achieved.
 Bot for al that I am relieved,
 Of that mi will was good therto,
 That love soffreth it be so
 That I schal swiche a bridel were.
 Now have ye herd al myn ansuere:
 To Godd, ma dame, I you betake,
 And warneth alle for mi sake,
 Of love that thei ben noght ydel,
 And bidd hem thenke upon mi brydel.' 190
 And with that word al sodienly
 Sche passeth, as it were a sky,⁶
 Al clene out of this ladi sihte:
 And tho for fere hire herte afflihte,⁷
 And seide to himself, 'Helas!
 I am riht in the same cas.
 Bot if I live after this day,
 I schal amende it, if I may.'
 And thus homward this lady wente,

And changede al hire ferste entente 200
 Withinne hire herte, and gan to swere
 That sche none haltres wolde bere.

THE TALE OF CEYX AND ALCEONE⁸

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. IV, l. 2917)

Mi sone, and for thou tellest so,
 A man mai finde of time ago
 That many a swevene⁹ hath be certain,
 Al be it so that som men sein
 That swevenes ben of no credence.
 Bot forto schewe in evidence
 That thei fulofte sothe thinges
 Betokene, I theken in my wrytinges
 To telle a tale therupon,
 Which fell be olde daies gon. 20

This finde I write in poesie:
 Ceix the king of Trocinie
 Hadde Alceone to his wif,
 Which as hire oghne hertes lif
 Him loveth; and he hadde also
 A brother, which was cleped tho
 Dedalion, and he per cas
 Fro kinde of man forschape was
 Into a goshawk of likenessse; 20
 Wherof the king gret hevynesse
 Hath take, and thoghte in his corage
 To gon upon a pelrinage
 Into a strange regioun,
 Wher he hath his devocioun
 To don his sacrifice and preie,
 If that he mihte in eny weie
 Toward the goddes finde grace
 His brother hele¹⁰ to pourchace,
 So that he mihte be reformed
 Of that he hadde be transformed. 30
 To this pourpos and to this ende
 This king was redy forto wende,
 As he which wolde go be schipe;
 And forto don him felaschipe
 His wif unto the see him broghte,
 With al hire herte and him besoghte,
 That he the time hire wolde sein,
 Whan that he thoghte come ayein:
 'Withinne,' he seith, 'two monthe day.'
 And thus in al the haste he may 40
 He tok his leve, and forth he seileth
 Wepende, and sche herself beweileth,

⁸ Gower's source is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XI, 266 f. Compare Chaucer's version in the *Book of the Duchess*, l. 62 f.

⁹ dream.

¹⁰ health, well-being.

¹ follow. ² turns her face away. ³ took.
⁴ sooner. ⁵ by lie. ⁶ cloud. ⁷ was afflicted.

And torneth hom, ther sche cam fro.
 Bot whan the monthes were ago,
 The whiche he sette of his comynge,
 And that sche herde no tydinge,
 Ther was no care forto seche :
 Wherof the goddes to beseche
 Tho sche began in many wise,
 And to Juno hire sacrificse
 Above alle othre most sche dede,
 And for hir lord sche hath so bede ¹
 To wite and knowe hou that he ferde,
 That Juno the goddesse hire herde
 Anon and upon this matiere
 Sche bad Yris hir messagere
 To Slepes hous that sche schal wende,
 And bidde him that he make an ende
 Be swevene and schewen al the cas
 Unto this ladi, hou it was.

This Yris, fro the hihe stage
 Which undertake hath the message,
 Hire reynn cope ² dede upon,
 The which was wonderli begon
 With colours of diverse hewe,
 An hundred mo than men it knewe ;
 The hevене lich unto a bowe
 Sche bende, and so she cam doun lowe,
 The god of slep wher that sche fond.
 And that was in a strange lond,
 Which marcheth ³ upon Chymerie :
 For ther, as seith the poesie,
 The god of slep hath mad his hous,
 Which of entaille ⁴ is merveilous.
 Under an hell ⁵ ther is a cave,
 Which of the sonne mai noght have,
 So that noman mai knowe ariht
 The point between the dai and nyht :
 Ther is no fyr, ther is no sparke,
 Ther is no dore, which mai charke, ⁶
 Wherof an yhe scholde unschette,
 So that inward ther is no lette.
 And forto speke of that withoute,
 Ther stant no gret tree nyh aboute
 Wher on ther myhte crowe or pie
 Alihte, forto clepe or crie :
 Ther is no cok to crowe day,
 Ne beste non which noise ⁷ may
 The hell ; bot al aboute round
 Ther is growende upon the ground
 Popi, which berth the sed of slep,
 With othere herbes suche an hep.
 A stille water for the nones
 Rennende upon the smale stones,
 Which hihte of Lethes the river,

Under that hell in such manere
 Ther is, which yifthe gret appetit
 To slepe. And thus full of delit
 Slep hath his hous ; and of his couche
 Withinne his chambre if I schal touche, ¹⁰⁰
 Of hebenus ⁸ that slepi tree
 The bordes al aboute be,
 And for he scholde slepe softe,
 Upon a fethrebed alofte
 He lith with many a pilwe of doun :
 The chambre is strowed up and doun
 With swevenes many thousandfold.
 Thus cam Yris into this hold,
 And to the bedd, which is al blak,
 Sche goth, and ther with Slep sche spak, ¹¹⁰
 And in the wise as sche was bede
 The message of Juno sche dede.
 Fulofte hir wordes sche reherceth,
 Er sche his slepi eres perceth ;
 With mochel wo bot ate laste
 His slombrende yhen ⁹ he upeaste
 And seide hir that it schal be do.
 Wherof among a thousand tho,
 Withinne his hous that slepi were,
 In special he ches out there ¹²⁰
 Thre, whiche scholden do this dede :
 The ferste of hem, so as I rede,
 Was Morpheus, the whos nature
 Is forto take the figure
 Of what persone that him liketh,
 Wherof that he fulofte entriketh ¹⁰
 The lif ¹¹ which slepe schal be nyhte ;
 And Itheus that other hihte,
 Which hath the vois of every soun,
 The chiere and the condicioun ¹³⁰
 Of every lif, what so it is :
 The thridde suiende ¹² after this
 Is Panthasas, which may transforme
 Of every thing the rihte forme,
 And change it in an other kinde.
 Upon hem thre, so as I finde,
 Of swevenes stant al thapparence,
 Which otherwhile is evidence
 And otherwhile bot a jape. ¹³
 Bot natheles it is so schape, ¹⁴⁰
 That Morpheus be nyht al one
 Appiereth until Alceone
 In likeness of hir housbonde
 Al naked ded upon the stronde,
 And hou he dreynthe ¹⁴ in special
 These othre tuo it schewen al.
 The tempeste of the blake cloude,
 The wode ¹⁵ see, the wyndes loude,

¹ prayed. ² rainy cloak. ³ borders.
⁴ fashion. ⁵ Kentish for hill. ⁶ creek. ⁷ disturb.

⁸ ebony. ⁹ eyes. ¹⁰ deceives. ¹¹ person.
¹² following. ¹³ trick. ¹⁴ drowned. ¹⁵ raging.

Al this sche mette,¹ and sih him dyen ;
Wherof that sche began to crien,

150

Slepende abedde ther sche lay.
And with that noise of hire affray
Hir wommen sterten up aboute,
Whiche of here ladi were in doute,
And axen hire hou that sche ferde ;
And sche, riht as sche syh and herde,
Hir swevene hath told hem everydel.
And thei it halsen² alle wel

And sein it is a tokne of goode ;
Bot til sche wiste hou that it stode,

160

Sche hath no confort in hire herte
Upon the morwe, and up sche sterte,
And to the see, where that sche mette
The bodi lay, withoute lette

Sche drowh; and whan that sche cam nyh,
Stark ded, hise armes sprad, sche syh
Hire lord flietende upon the wawe.³
Wherof hire wittes ben withdrawe,
And sche, which tok of deth no kepe,

170

Anon forth lepte into the depe,
And wolde have cawht him in hire arm.

This infortune of double harm
The goddes fro the hevene above
Behielde, and for the trowthe of love,

Which in this worthi ladi stod,
Thei have upon the salte flod
Hire dreinte⁴ lord and hire also

Fro deth to lyve turned so,
That thei ben schapen into briddes
Swimmende upon the wawe amidde.

180

And whan sche sih hire lord livende
In liknesse of a bridd swimmende,
And sche was of the same sort,
So as sche mihte do desport,

Upon the joie which sche hadde
Hire wynges bothe abroad sche spradde,
And him, so as sche mai suffice,

Beclipte⁵ and keste in such a wise,
As sche was whilom wont to do :

Hire wynges for hire armes tuo
Sche tok, and for hire lippes softe
Hire harde bile, and so fulofte

190

Sche fondeth⁶ in hire briddes forme,
If that sche mihte herself conforme
To do the plesance of a wif,

As sche dede in that other lif :

For thogh sche hadde hir pouer lore,⁷
Hir will stod as it was tofore,

And serveth him so as sche mai.
Wherof into this ilke day

200

Togedre upon the see thei wone,⁸

Wher many a dowhter and a sone
Thei bringen forth of briddes kinde ;
And for men scholden take in mynde
This Alceoun the trewe queene,
Hire briddes yit, as it is seene,
Of Alceoun⁹ the name bere.

THE TALE OF ADRIAN AND BARDUS¹⁰

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. v, l. 4937)

To speke of an unkinde¹¹ man,
I finde hou whilom Adrian,
Of Rome which a gret lord was,
Upon a day as he per cas¹²
To wode in his huntinge wente,
It hapneth at a soudein wente,¹³
After his chace as he poursuieth,
Thurgh happ, the which noman eschuieth,
He fell unwar into a pet,¹⁴

10

Wher that it mihte noght be let.
The pet was dep and he fell lowe,
That of his men non myhte knowe

Wher he becam, for non was nyh,
Which of his fall the meschief syh.
And thus al one thier he lay

Clepende¹⁵ and criende al the day
For socour and deliverance,
Til ayein eve it fell per chance,

A while er it began to nyhte,
A povere man, which Bardus hihte,

20

Cam forth walkende with his asse,
And hadde gadred him a tasse¹⁶
Of grene stickes and of dreie

To selle, who that wolde hem beie,
As he which hadde no lifode,¹⁷
Bot whanne he myhte such a lode

To tounne with his asse carie.
And as it fell him forto tarie
That ilke time nyh the pet,

And hath the trusse faste knet,
He herde a vois, which cride dimme,

30

And he his ere to the brimme
Hath leid, and herde it was a man,
Which seide, 'Ha, help hier Adrian,

And I wol yiven half mi good.'

The povere man this understod,
As he that wolde gladly winne,
And to this lord which was withinne
He spak and seide, 'If I thee save,
What sikernesne¹⁸ schal I have

40

⁹ Halcyon. ¹⁰ Gower's source may be the *Speculum Stultorum* of Nigel Wireker (fl. 1190).

¹¹ by chance. ¹² turn. ¹³ Kentish for *pit*. ¹⁴ calling.

¹⁵ bundle. ¹⁶ livelihood. ¹⁷ security.

¹ dreamed. ² interpret. ³ wawe. ⁴ drowned.

⁵ embraced. ⁶ tries. ⁷ lost. ⁸ dwell.

Of covenant, that afterward
Thou wolt me yive such reward
As thou behiitest nou tofore ?'

The other hath his othes swore
By hevене and be the goddes alle,
If that it myghte so befallē
That he out of the pet him broghte,
Of all the goodes whiche he oghte¹
He schal have evene halvende.

This Bardus seide he wolde wel ;
And with this word his asse anon
He let untrusse, and therupon
Doun goth the corde into the pet,
To which he hath at ende knet
A staf, wherby, he seide, he wolde
That Adrian him scholde holde.
Bot it was tho per chance falle,
Into that pet was also falle
An ape, which at thilke throwe,
Whan that the corde cam doun lowe,
Al sodeinli therto he skipte

And it in bothe hise armes clipte.²
And Bardus with his asse anon
Him hath updrawe, and he is gon.
But whan he sih it was an ape,
He wende al hadde ben a jape³
Of faierie, and sore him dradde :⁴
And Adrian eftsone gradde⁵
For help, and cride and preide faste,
And he eftsone his corde caste ;
Bot whan it cam unto the grounde,
A gret serpent it hath bewounde,
The which Bardus anon up drouh.
And thanne him thoughte wel ynouh
It was fantosme, bot yit he herde
The vois, and he therto ansuerde,
'What wiht art thou in Goddes name ?'

'I am,' quod Adrian, 'the same,
Whos good thou schalt have evene half.'
Quod Bardus, 'Thanne a Goddes half
The thridde time assaie I schal':
And caste his corde forth withal
Into the pet, and whan it cam
To him, this lord of Rome it nam,
And therupon him hath adressed,
And with his hand fulofte blessed,
And thanne he bad to Bardus hale.
And he, which understod his tale,
Betwen him and his asse al softe
Hath drawe and set him up alofte
Withouten harm al esely.
He seith noght ones 'Grant merci,'⁶

Bot strauhte⁷ him forth to the cite,
And let this povere Bardus be.
And natheles this simple man
His covenant, so as he can,
Hath axed; and that other seide,
If so be that he him umbreide⁸
Of oght that hath be speke or do,
It schal ben venged on him so,
That him were betre to be ded.
And he can tho non other red,⁹
But on his asse ayein he caste
His trusse, and heith homward faste:
And whan that he cam hom to bedde,
He tolde his wif hou that he spedde.
Bot finaly to speke oght more
Unto this lord he dradde him sore,
So that a word ne dorste he sein:
And thus upon the morwe ayein,
In the manere as I recorde,
Forth with his asse and with his corde
To gadre wode, as he dede er,
He goth; and whan that he cam ner
Unto the place where he wolde,
He hath his ape anon beholde,
Which hadde gadred al aboute
Of stickes hiere and there a route,¹⁰
And leide hem redy to his hond,
Wherof he made his trosse and bond.
Fro dai to dai and in this wise
This ape profreth his servise,
So that he hadde of wode ynouh.
Upon a time and as he drouh
Toward the wode, he sih besyde
The grete gastli serpent glyde,
Til that sche cam in his presence,
And in hir kinde a reverence
Sche hath him do, and forth withal
A ston mor briht than a cristall
Out of hir mouth tofore his weie
Sche let doun falle, and wente aweie,
For that he schal noght ben adrad.
Tho was this povere Bardus glad,
Thonkende God, and to the ston
He goth and takth it up anon,
And hath gret wonder in his wit
Hou that the beste him hath aquit,
Wher that the mannes sone bath failed,
For whom he hadde most travailed.
Bot al he putte in Goddes hond,
And torneth hom, and what he fond
Unto his wif he hath it schewed;
And thei, that wern bothe lewed,¹¹
Acorden that he scholde it selle.

¹ owned. ² caught. ³ trick.
⁴ he feared; lit., it dreaded him (dat.).
⁵ cried again. ⁶ much thanks.

⁷ lit. stretched, i.e. hurried. ⁸ reproached.
⁹ counsel. ¹⁰ quantity. ¹¹ ignorant.

And he no lengere wolde duelle,
 Bot forth anon upon the tale
 The ston he profreth to the sale;
 And riht as he himself it sette,
 The jeweler anon forth fette
 The gold and made his paiement,
 Therof was no delaïement.

Thus whan this ston was boght and sold,
 Homward with joie manyfold
 This Bardus goth; and whan he cam
 Home to his hous and that he nam
 His gold out of his purs, withinn
 He fond his ston also therinne,
 Wherof for joie his herte pleide,
 Unto his wif and thus he seide,
 'Lo, hier my gold, lo, hier mi ston !'
 His wif hath wonder therupon,
 And axeth him hou that mai be.
 'Nou be mi trouthe I not,'¹ quod he,
 'Bot I dar swere upon a bok,
 That to my marchant I it tok,'²
 And he it hadde whan I wente:
 So knowe I noght to what entente
 It is nou hier, bot it be grace.
 Forthi tomorwe in other place
 I wole it fonde³ forto selle,
 And if it wol noght with him duelle,
 Bot crepe into mi purs ayein,
 Than dar I sauflly⁴ swere and sein,
 It is the vertu of the ston.'

The morwe cam, and he is gon
 To seche aboute in other stede
 His ston to selle, and he so dede,
 And lefte it with his chapman there.
 Bot whan that he cam elleswhere,
 In presence of his wif at hom,
 Out of his purs and that he nom⁵
 His gold, he fond his ston withal:
 And thus it fell him overal,⁶
 Where he it solde in sondri place,

¹ know not.² gave.³ try.⁴ safely.⁵ took.⁶ everywhere.

Such was the fortune and the grace.
 Bot so wel may nothing ben hidd,
 That it nys ate laste kidd:⁷

This fame goth aboute Rome
 So ferforth, that the wordes come
 To themperour Justinian;
 And he let sende for the man,
 And axede him hou that it was.
 And Bardus tolde him al the cas,
 Hou that the worm and ek the beste,
 Although thei maden no beheste,⁸
 His travail hadden wel aquit;
 Bot he which hadde a mannes wit,
 And made his covenant be mouthe
 And swor therto al that he couthe
 To parte and given half his good,
 Hath nou foryete hou that it stod,
 As he which wol no trouthe holde.

This Emperour al that he tolde
 Hath herd, and thilke unkindenesse
 He seide he wolde himself redresse.
 And thus in court of juggement
 This Adrian was thanne assent,
 And the querele in audience
 Declared was in the presence
 Of themperour and many mo;
 Wherof was mochel speche tho
 And gret wondringe among the press.
 Bot ate laste natheles
 For the partie which hath pleigned
 The lawe hath diemed⁹ and ordeigned
 Be hem that were avised wel,
 That he schal have the halvendel¹⁰
 Thurghout of Adrianes good.
 And thus of thilke unkinde blod
 Stant the memoire into this day,
 Wherof that every wysman may
 Ensamplen him, and take in mynde
 What schame it is to ben unkinde;
 Ayein the which reson debateth,
 And every creature it hateth.

⁷ known. ⁸ promise. ⁹ deemed.¹⁰ half.

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GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE PROLOGUE

*Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of
Caunterbury*

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote¹
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the
rote,

And bathed every veyne in swich² licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,³
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yē,⁴ 10
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages⁴);
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
And palmers for to seken straunge
strondes

To ferne halwes, couthe⁵ in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they
were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.⁶
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon, 31
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward⁷ erly for to ryse,
To take our way ther as I yow devyse.

¹ sweet. ² such.
In the first half of April the sun is in the second
half of the Zodiacal sign of the Ram.
⁴ dispositions. ⁵ distant saints, renowned.
⁶ made as comfortable as possible. ⁷ agreement.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what
degree;

And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy
man,

That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And thereto hadde he riden (no man
ferre⁸)

As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was
wonne;

Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne⁹
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.¹⁰

In Lettow¹¹ hadde he reysed¹² and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.

In Gernade¹³ at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir,¹⁴ and riden in Belmarye.¹⁵

At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,¹⁶
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete
See¹⁷

At many a noble armee¹⁸ hadde he be. 60
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene¹⁹

In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.
This like¹⁹ worthy knight had been also

⁸ farther.
⁹ had the honor of sitting at the head of the table.
¹⁰ Prussia. ¹¹ Lithuania.
¹² made a campaign. ¹³ Grenada.
¹⁴ Algeciras near Cape Trafalgar, taken by Alfonso of
Castile in 1344.
¹⁵ Benmarin and Tremeyen, districts in the north of
Africa where the Christians and Moors fought.
¹⁶ Ayas and Adalia on the south coast of Asia Minor.
¹⁷ Mediterranean.
¹⁸ expedition; *anywe* in one MS., which Skeat pre-
fers.
¹⁹ same.

Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,¹
 Ageyn² another hethen in Turkye:
 And evermore he hadde a sovereyn pryȝ.³
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
 And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
 He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70
 In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
 He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
 But for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors⁴ were gode, but he was nat gay.
 Of fustian⁵ he wered a gipoun⁶
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun,⁷
 For he was late y-come from his viage,
 And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong
 SQUYER,

A lovyere, and a lusty bachelor,⁸ 80
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in
 presse.⁹

Of twenty yere of age he was, I gesse.
 Of his stature he was of evene¹⁰ lengthe,
 And wonderly deliver,¹¹ and greet of
 strengthe.

And he had been somtyme in chivachye,¹²
 In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardy, e
 And born him wel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady¹³ grace.
 Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede. 90
 Singinge he was, or floytinge,¹⁴ al the day;
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and
 wyde.

Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
 He coude songes make and wel endyte,¹⁵
 Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye
 and wryte.

So hote he lovede, that by nightertale¹⁶
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf¹⁷ biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN¹⁸ hadde he, and servants namo
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
 A sheef of pecock-arwes brighte and kene

¹ Palatia, in Asia Minor or in the Sea of Marmora.

² against.

³ reputation.

⁴ N.B. the plural — a long-stem neuter noun in Anglo-Saxon. (Cf. year in l. 82.)

⁵ coarse cloth.

⁶ doublet.

⁷ stained by the iron rings of his coat-of-mail.

⁸ aspirant for knighthood.

⁹ curly, as if from curling-tongs or some such machine.

¹⁰ medium.

¹¹ active.

¹² cavalry expeditions.

¹³ lady's — an old feminine genitive.

¹⁴ piping.

¹⁵ compose both words and music of songs.

¹⁶ night-time. ¹⁷ carved. ¹⁸ Yeoman.

Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres
 lowe),

And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
 A not-heed¹⁹ hadde he, with a broun visage.
 Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage. 110
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,²⁰
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,
 Harneised²¹ wel, and sharp as point of
 spere;

A Cristofre²² on his brest of silver shene.²³
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and
 coy;²⁴

Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt
 Loy;²⁵ 120

And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,²⁶
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,²⁷
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingers in hir sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel
 kepe, 130

That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.²⁸
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing²⁹ sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir
 draughte.

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,³⁰
 And sikerly³¹ she was of greet disport,³²
 And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere
 Of court, and been estatlich³³ of manere, 140
 And to ben holden digne³⁴ of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or
 bledde.

Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde

¹⁹ cropped pate. ²⁰ To protect the forearm from the bowstring.

²¹ Adorned. ²² Image of St. Christopher.

²³ fair. ²⁴ shy.

²⁵ On this favorite saint see the article by J. L. Lowes in the *Romanic Review*, v, 368.

²⁶ elegantly. ²⁷ A convent near London. ²⁸ pleasure. ²⁹ smallest trace. ³⁰ reached. ³¹ verily.

³² was a good-natured person. ³³ dignified. ³⁴ worthy.

With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-
breed.¹

But sore weep she if oon of hem were
deed,

Or if men² smoot it with a yerde smerte:³
And al was conscience and tendre herte.

Ful semely hir wimpel pinched⁴ was; ¹⁵¹
Hir nose tretys;⁵ hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and
reed;

But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily,⁶ she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis⁷ was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire⁸ of bedes, gauded⁹ al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful
shene, ¹⁶⁰

On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES
THREE.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye,¹⁰
An out-rydere,¹¹ that lovede venerye;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in
stable:

And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel
here

Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, ¹⁷⁰
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-
belle.

Ther as this lord was keper of the celle,¹²
The rule of saint Maure or of saint Beneit,¹³
By-cause that it was old and som-del
streit, — ¹⁴

This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled¹⁵ hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,¹⁶
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; ¹⁸⁰
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an
oistre;

¹ a fine sort of bread — almost cake. ² one. ³ with a stick smartly. ⁴ pleated. ⁵ well shaped. ⁶ certainly. ⁷ elegant. ⁸ string.

⁹ After every ten corals of her rosary was a green bead.

¹⁰ a preëminent one.

¹¹ one that had to oversee the manors belonging to his convent.

¹² subordinate convent.

¹³ St. Maur and St. Benedict are two of the founders of the great, strict Benedictine order in the sixth century.

¹⁴ strict. ¹⁵ plucked. ¹⁶ *recoileless* in most MSS.

And I seyde, his opinioun was good.

What sholde he studie, and make himselven
wood,¹⁷

Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken¹⁸ with his handes, and labour, e,
As Austin bit¹⁹? How shal the world be
served?

Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therefore he was a pricasour²⁰ aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel
in flight; ¹⁹⁰

Of priking²¹ and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleeves purfled²² at the hond
With grys,²³ and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled,²⁴ that shoon as any
glas,

And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;²⁵ ²⁰⁰
His eyen stepe,²⁶ and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;²⁷
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certainly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned²⁸ goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a
merye,

A limitour,²⁹ a ful solempne³⁰ man.
In alle the ordres foure³¹ is noon that can³² ²¹⁰
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.³³
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns³⁴ over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the
toun:

For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat. ²²⁰
Ful sweetly herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;

¹⁷ crazy. ¹⁸ work. ¹⁹ St. Augustine bids. ²⁰ enthusiastic rider. ²¹ riding, lit. "spurring." ²² adorned. ²³ fur. ²⁴ bald. ²⁵ stout, *en bon point*. ²⁶ bright, protruding.

²⁷ His head steamed like the vat of a distilling apparatus; or, his eyes shone like the fire under a cauldron.

²⁸ tormented.

²⁹ one licensed to beg in a limited district.

³⁰ important.

³¹ Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Austin Friars.

³² knows. ³³ pillar. ³⁴ rich farmers.

He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
 Ther as he wiste to han¹ a good pitaunce;
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,
 He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore
 smerte. 230

Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
 Men moot² yeve silver to the povre freres.
 His tipet was ay farsed³ ful of knyves
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
 And certainly he hadde a mery note;
 Wel coude he singe and playen on a rote.⁴
 Of yeddinges⁵ he bar utterly the prys.
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240
 And everich hostiler and tappestere,⁶
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;⁷
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,⁸
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
 For to delen with no swich poraille,⁹
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
 And over-al ther as¹⁰ profit sholde aryse
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;¹¹
 For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,¹²
 So plesaunt was his '*In principio*,'¹³
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he
 wente.

His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.¹⁴
 And rage¹⁵ he coude, as it were right a
 whelpe.¹⁶

In love-dayes¹⁷ ther coude he muchel
 helpe.

For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,¹⁸
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre
 scoler, 260

But he was lyk a maister or a pope.

Of double worsted was his semi-cope,¹⁹

¹ knew he should have. ² One should. ³ stuffed.

⁴ fiddle. ⁵ In songs. ⁶ bar-maid.

⁷ Better than he did any leper or beggar-woman.

⁸ It was not suitable, considering his profession.

⁹ poor trash. ¹⁰ And everywhere that.

¹¹ One MS. inserts here:

And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;

Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;

¹² shoe. ¹³ *John*, i, 1, a favorite phrase with friars.

¹⁴ What he begged (*purchas*) was more than his
 regular income (*rent*).

¹⁵ behave violently, wantonly. ¹⁶ young dog.

¹⁷ arbitration days. ¹⁸ recluse. ¹⁹ short cape.

That rounded as a belle out of the presse.²⁰
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,
 To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
 And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MERCHANT was ther with a forked
 berd, 270

In mottelee,²¹ and hye on horse he sat,
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
 His botes clapsed faire and fetisly.
 His reasons he spak ful solempnely,
 Souninge²² alway th'encrees of his win-
 ning.

He wolde the see were kept for any thing
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.²³
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes
 selle.²⁴

This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;²⁵
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette, 280
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevi-
 saunce.²⁶

For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
 But sooth to seyn, I noot²⁷ how men him
 calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.

As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtpey;²⁸ 290
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
 For him was lever²⁹ have at his beddes
 heed

Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
 Than robes riche, or fithele,³⁰ or gay san-
 trye.³¹

But al be that he was a philosopre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;³²
 But al that he mighte of his freendes
 hente,³³

On bokes and on lerninge he it spente, 300

²⁰ It had been kept on a form, or clothes-press.

²¹ a mixed stuff. ²² Relating to.

²³ He wanted the sea-route between these ports kept
 guarded and open at any expense.

²⁴ sell money at exchange—very likely an illegal
 business.

²⁵ employed. ²⁶ shifts for raising money. ²⁷ know
 not. ²⁸ outermost cloak. ²⁹ he would rather.

³⁰ fiddle. ³¹ psaltery, dulcimer.

³² The alchemists, who pretended to change baser
 metals to gold, were also termed philosophers.

³³ get.

And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.¹
Of studie took he most cure² and most
hede.

Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyð in forme and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in³ moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly
teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,⁴ 310
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour⁵ was no-wher
noon.

Al was fe simple to him in effect,⁶
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.⁷ 320
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,⁸
That from the tyme of king William were
falle.

Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,⁹
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but boomy in a medlee cote.¹⁰
Girt with a ceint¹¹ of silk, with barres¹²
smale;

Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330

A FRANKLEYN was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesyne.
Of his complexioun¹³ he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe¹⁴ a sop in
wyn.¹⁶

To liven in delyt was ever his wone,¹⁶
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicittee parfyt.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Saint Julian¹⁷ he was in his contree. 340

His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;¹⁸
A better envyned¹⁹ man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete²⁰ was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteuous
It snowed²¹ in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deynteys that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,²²
And many a breem and many a luce in
stewe.²³ 350

Wo²⁴ was his cook, but-if²⁵ his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant²⁶ in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful oft tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas²⁷ and a gipser²⁸ al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;²⁹
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.³⁰ 360

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,³¹
Were with us eek, clothed in o liverie³²
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.³³
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked³⁴ was;
Hir knyves were y-chaped³⁵ noght with
bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and
weel,

Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle³⁶ on a days. 370
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel³⁷ hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certain were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-clept³⁸ 'ma dame,'
And goon to vigilyës³⁹ al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the
nones,
To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
And poudre-marchant tart,⁴⁰ and galin-
gale.⁴⁰ 380
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London
ale.

1 study. 2 care. 3 Tending toward.
4 the porch of St. Paul's, a lawyers' haunt.
5 possibly, conveyancer.
6 Apparently—"He could get about, bring to naught,
all restrictions on land."
7 invalidated. 8 He could cite cases precisely.
9 compose and write out a deed, etc.
10 coat of divers colors. 11 girdle.
12 transverse metal bands on the girdle.
13 temperament, as well as coloring.
14 in the morning. 15 wine with cake or bread in it.
16 custom. 17 Patron saint of hospitality.

18 uniform in quality. 19 with a better wine-cellar.
20 meat pies. 21 snowed. 22 captivity. 23 fish-
pond. 24 Woeful. 25 unless. 26 a permanent
dining-table—not boards on trestles. 27 dagger.
28 pouch. 29 accountant, treasurer. 30 landholder,
squire. 31 weaver, dyer, and upholsterer. 32 distin-
ctive dress. 33 guild. 34 trimmed. 35 mounted.
36 guildhall. 37 property 38 the eves of festivals
39 tart flavoring-powder. 40 a spice.

He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,

Maken mortreux,¹ and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shine a mormal² hadde he.
For blankmanger,³ that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste:⁴

For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncey,⁵ as he couthe,⁶ 390
In a gowne of falding⁷ to the knee.

A daggere hanging on a laas⁸ hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;

And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe

From Burdeux-ward,⁹ whyl that the chap-man sleep.

Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,

By water he sente hem hoom to every lond,¹⁰ 400

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His streames and his daungers him bisydes,¹¹
His herberwe¹² and his mone, his lode-menage,¹³

Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.

Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.

He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,

From Gootlond¹⁴ to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne; 409

His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.
With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISYK,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk

To speke of fisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.¹⁵

¹ stews. ² sore. ³ blanco-mange, i.e. minced, spiced chicken.

⁴ dwelling in the west of England. ⁵ an awkward nag. ⁶ as best he knew how. ⁷ coarse woollen.

⁸ line. ⁹ stolen drinks out of the casks he was bringing from Bordeaux. ¹⁰ threw them overboard. ¹¹ near him. ¹² harbor. ¹³ pilotage.

¹⁴ The island Gottland. ¹⁵ By astrology he took advantage of the conjunctions of the stars which best suited his patient.

Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images¹⁶ for his pacient.

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,¹⁷ 420

And where engendred, and of what humour;

He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,

Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.¹⁸
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,

To sende him drogges and his letuaries,¹⁹
For ech of hem made other for to winne;

Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,

And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;

Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;

Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.²⁰
Of his diete mesurable was he,

For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.

His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwin and in pers²¹ he clad was al,

Lyned with taffata and with sendal,²² 440
And yet he was but esy of dispenche;²³

He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial.²⁴

Therefore he lovede gold in special.
A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,

But she was som-del²⁵ deef, and that was scathe.²⁶

Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,²⁷

She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parissh wyf ne was ther noon

That to th' offring bifore hir sholde goon; 450

And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,

That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;²⁸

I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sunday were upon hir heed.

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
¹⁶ He made his talismans just when the stars were most propitious. An ascendant is the degree of the zodiac at which a star rises above the eastern horizon.

¹⁷ The four qualities of the body. ¹⁸ remedy. ¹⁹ electuary, syrup.

²⁰ All great medical authorities, the last two being Englishmen, and Bernard a Scot.

²¹ blood-red and sky-blue. ²² thin silk. ²³ a small spender.

²⁴ Tincture of gold was used to strengthen the heart. ²⁵ somewhat. ²⁶ a shame. ²⁷ knack. ²⁸ weave.

Ful streite y-tyed, and shoos ful moiste
and newe.

Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of
hewe.

She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore¹ she hadde
fyve, 460

Withouten other companye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.²
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge stream;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at saint Jame,³ and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-toth⁴ was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere⁵ esily she sat,
Y-wimpled⁶ wel, and on hir heed an hat 470
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipis large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawship wel coude she laughe and
carpe.⁷

Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.⁸

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN⁹ of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parisshe¹⁰ devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his thythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshe¹¹ aboute
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce. 490
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-
sonder,

But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he
taughte;

Out of the gospel¹¹ he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do? 500

For if a preest be foul, on whom we
truste,

No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,¹²
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clenness, how that his sheep shold
live.

He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the
myre,

And ran to London, un-to seynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,¹³ 510
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;¹⁴
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his
folde,

So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to simple man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,¹⁵
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisnesse: 520
But it were any persone obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben¹⁶ sharply for the
nones.

A better preest, I trowe that nowher noon
is.

He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-
selve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his
brother,

That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a
fother,¹⁷ 530

A trewe swinker¹⁸ and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or
smerte,¹⁹

And thanne his neighebour right as him-
selve.

He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and
delve,

For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might,

¹ The ceremony was at the door.

² just now. ³ Compostella in Spain.

⁴ With gaps between her teeth; or else goat-toothed,
i.e. lascivious. ⁵ ambling nag. ⁶ With a pleated
hood. ⁷ joke. ⁸ tricks. ⁹ Parson. ¹⁰ parish-
ioners. ¹¹ Matthew, v, 19.

¹² heed.

¹³ At St. Paul's were thirty-five chantries, where
fifty-four priests said masses for the repose of souls.

¹⁴ to be a guild chaplain. ¹⁵ haughty. ¹⁶ snub.

¹⁷ load. ¹⁸ worker. ¹⁹ though he had good fortune
or bad.

His thythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.¹
In a tabard² he rood upon a mere. 541

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour³ and a Pardoner⁴ also,
A Maunciple,⁵ and my-self; ther were
namo.

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the
nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of
bones;

That proved wel⁶ for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the
ram.⁷

He was short-sholdred,⁸ brood, a thikke
knarre,⁹

Ther nas na dore that he nolde heve of
harre,¹⁰ 550

Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a
spade.

Up-on the cop¹¹ right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowe's eres;
His nose-thirles¹² blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere¹³ and a goliardeys,¹⁴ 560
And that was most of sinne and har-
lotryes.¹⁵

Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen
thryes;¹⁶

And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,¹⁷
pardee.

A whyte cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and
sowne,

And ther-with-al he broghte us out of
towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a tem-
ple,¹⁸

Of which achatours¹⁹ mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille
For whether that he payde, or took by
taille,²⁰ 570

¹ by working himself and by giving of his property.

² peasants' sleeveless coat.

³ A summoner cited culprits before the ecclesiastical court. ⁴ A pardoner hawked indulgences. ⁵ steward, caterer.

⁶ was certainly so. ⁷ the prize. ⁸ short in the upper arm. ⁹ chunk of a man. ¹⁰ hinge.

¹¹ tip. ¹² nostrils. ¹³ chatterer. ¹⁴ teller of indecent stories. ¹⁵ wicked pranks. ¹⁶ take triple toll.

¹⁷ Probably because it was expert in judging the fineness of his flour. The phrase was proverbial.

¹⁸ college of lawyers. ¹⁹ purchasers.

²⁰ on credit, i.e. by tally.

Algate²¹ he wayted so in his achat,²²
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and
lond

Of any lord that is in Engeland, 580
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour detteles, but he were wood,²³
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller
cappe.²⁴

The REVE was a selendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he
can.

His heer was by his eres round y-shorn. 589
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.²⁵
Ful longe were his legges, and ful leue,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him
winne.²⁶

Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the
reyn,

The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet,²⁷ his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor,²⁸ and his pul-
trye,

Was hoolly in this reve's governing,
And by his covenaut yaf the rekening, 600
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrear-
age.²⁹

Ther nas baillif, ne herde,³⁰ ne other
hyne,³¹

That he ne knew his sleighte and his
covyne;³²

They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
His woning³³ was ful fair up-on an heeth,
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude better than his lord purchase.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly, 610

²¹ At any rate. ²² purchase. ²³ unless he was crazy. ²⁴ fooled them all, "aller" is an old genitive plural, A. S. *albra*.

²⁵ His hair was cut short across the front, like a priest's.

²⁶ get the better of him. ²⁷ cattle. ²⁸ farm stock.

²⁹ catch him in arrears. ³⁰ herdsman. ³¹ farm servant. ³² trickery. ³³ dwelling.

To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and
hood.

In youthe he lerned hadde a good mis-
ter,¹

He was wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,²
That was al pomely grey,³ and highte
Scot.

A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I
telle,

Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle. ⁶²⁰
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our
route.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that
place,

That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem ⁴ he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;
With scalled ⁵ browes blake, and piled ⁶
berd;

Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge,⁷ ne brimston,
Boras, ceruce,⁸ ne oille of tartre noon, ⁶³⁰
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his wheelkes
whyte,

Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, onyons, and eek
lekes,

And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as
blood.

Than wolde he speke, and crye as he were
wood,

And whan that he wel dronken hadde the
wyn,

Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,

That he had lerned out of some decree; ⁶⁴⁰
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye known wel, how that a jay
Can clepen 'Watte,'⁹ as well as can the pope.

But who-so coude in other thing him grope,¹⁰
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;

Ay 'Questio quid iuris,'¹¹ wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot ¹² and a kinde;

A better felawe sholde men noht finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn ⁶⁵⁰
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle;
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.¹³
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.
'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde
he.

But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede —
For curs wul slee, right as assoilling ⁶⁶⁰
sav-
eth —

And also war him of a *significavit*.¹⁴
In daunger ¹⁵ hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge girles ¹⁶ of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake,¹⁷
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncival,¹⁸ his freend and his com-
peer, ⁶⁷⁰

That streight was comen fro the court of
Rome.

Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to
me.'

This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,¹⁹
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as
wex,

But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike ²⁰ of
flex;

By ounces ²¹ henge his lokkes thet he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres over-
spradde;

But thinne it lay, by colpons ²² oon and
oon; ²³

But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon, ⁶⁸⁰
For it was trussed up in his walet.

Him thoughte, ²⁴ he rood al of the newe
jet,²⁵

Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.

A vernicle ²⁶ hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,

¹³ fleece a gull. ¹⁴ A writ of excommunication.

¹⁵ Within his power. ¹⁶ youth of either sex.

¹⁷ Sign of an ale-house. ¹⁸ The name of a hospital

in Charing. ¹⁹ bass. ²⁰ hank. ²¹ small portions.

²² shreds. ²³ here and there. ²⁴ It seemed to

him. ²⁵ the latest fashion.

²⁶ Miniature of St. Veronica's handkerchief with the
face of Christ — a token of his having been at Rome.

¹ trade. ² cob. ³ dapple gray. ⁴ pimpled.

⁵ scabby. ⁶ thin. ⁷ ointment prepared from

protoxide of lead. ⁸ white-lead.

⁹ i.e. Walter. Jays were called Wat as parrots are
called Polly, and it was a mediæval joke to teach them
to say "Wat shrew," cursing themselves.

¹⁰ test. ¹¹ "What's the law here?" ¹² rogue.

Bret-ful¹ of pardoun come from Rome al
hoot.

A voys he hadde as small as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave; 690
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardonere.
For in his male² he hadde a pilwe-beer,³
Which that he seyde was our lady veyl:
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he
wente

Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun,⁴ ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700
But with thise reliques, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest⁵ he song an offertorie; 710
For wel he wiste, whan that song was
songe,
He moste⁶ preche, and wel affyle⁷ his
tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the
cause

Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the
Belle.

But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,
That ye n'arette⁸ it nat my vileinye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this ma-
tere,

To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730

Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;⁹
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his
brother;

He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740
Eek Plato seith,¹⁰ who-so that can him
rede,

The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree¹¹
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chere made our hoste us eve-
richon,

And to the soper sette us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us
leste.¹² 750

A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,¹³
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe: 14
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel
y-taught,

And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our reken-
inges; 760

And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste
noght.

'Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede. 770
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen¹⁵ and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;

¹ freely.

² Boethius, bk. III, prose 12; Plato's *Timaeus*, 29 B.
³ in order of precedence.

⁴ we were disposed — *leste* is Kentish dialect.

⁵ prominent. ⁶ Cheapside. ⁷ tell stories.

¹ Brim-full. ² mail, wallet. ³ pillowslip. ⁴ a metal
compounded chiefly of copper and zinc. ⁵ best of all.
⁶ might. ⁷ polish. ⁸ reckon.

And therefore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst,¹ and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye, 780
Now, by my fader² soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.³

Our counseil was nat longe for to seehe;⁴
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it
wys,⁴

And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for
the beste;

But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and
pleyn, 790

That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,⁵
Of adventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of
alle,

That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,⁶
Shal have a soper at our aller cost.⁷
Here in this place, sitting by this post, 800
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunter-
bury.

And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,⁸
And I wol erly shape⁹ me therfore.'

This thing was graunted, and our othes
swore 810

With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,

¹ before. ² Genitive — A.S. *fader*.

³ we were soon agreed.

⁴ it seemed to us not worth while to make a fuss.

⁵ Some would throw out these two lines.

⁶ of the best sentiments, and the most entertaining.

⁷ at the cost of all of us; our and aller are genitive

plurals — A.S. *ūre eallra*.

⁸ more. — A.S. *mā*; Shakespeare, *more*.

⁹ make my arrangements.

In heigh and lowe;¹⁰ and thus, by oon as-
sent,

We been acorded to his jugement.

And ther-up-on the wyn was fet¹¹ anon;
We drunken, and to reste wente echon, 820
With-outen any lenger taryinge.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,¹²
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than
pas,¹⁸

Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.¹⁴

And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow
leste.

Ye woot your forward,¹⁵ and I it yow re-
corde.

If even-song and morwe-song acorde,¹⁶ 830
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.

As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut,¹⁷ er that we ferrer
twinne;¹⁸

He which that hath the shortest shal bi-
ginne.

Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my
lord,

Now draweth¹⁹ cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh¹⁹ neer,' quod he, 'my lady prior-
esse;

And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfast-
nesse, 840

Ne studieth¹⁹ noght; ley hond to, every
man.'

Anon to drawn every wight bigan.

And shortly for to tellen, as it was,

Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,²⁰

The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,
Of which ful blythe and glad was every
wight;

And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,²¹

As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?

And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850

As he that wys was and obedient

To kepe his forward by his free assent,

He seyde: 'Sin I shal beginne the game,

What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!

¹⁰ wholly. ¹¹ fetched. ¹² the cock who waked
us all. ¹³ faster than a walk. ¹⁴ A watering-place
for horses two miles out. ¹⁵ agreement.

¹⁶ If you sing the same tune now that you did last
night.

¹⁷ lots. ¹⁸ draw farther from town. ¹⁹ Polite
imperative plurals. ²⁰ by hap, or fate, or chance.

²¹ promise and agreement.

Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.⁷
 And with that word we riden forth our
 weye; 856
 And he bigan with right a mery chere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

THE KNIGHT'S TALE

*Jamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis
 Prelia, laurigero, etc.* [Statius, *Theb.* XII, 519.]¹

WHYLOM, as olde stories tellen us,
 Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;
 Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour
 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
 Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
 What with his wisdom and his chivalrye,
 He conquered al the regne² of Femenye,
 That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;
 And weddede the queene Ipolita, 10
 And broghte hir hoom with him in his con-
 tree

With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee,
 And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.
 And thus with victorie and with melodye
 Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
 And al his hoost in armes him bisyde.

And certes, if it nere to long to here,
 I wolde han told yow fully the manere
 How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
 By Theseus, and by his chivalrye; 20
 And of the grete bataille for the nones³
 Bitwixen Athenes and Amazones;
 And how assaged was Ipolita,
 The faire, hardy queene of Scithia;
 And of the feste that was at his weddinge,
 And of the tempest at his hoom-cominge;
 But al that thing I moot⁴ as now forbere.
 I have, God woot, a large field to ere,⁵
 And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
 The remenant of the tale is long y-nough. 30
 I wol nat letten⁶ eek noon of this route;
 Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
 And lat see now who shal the soper winne;
 And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn beginne.

This duk, of whom I make mencion,
 When he was come almost unto the toun,
 In al his wele⁷ and in his moste pryde,
 He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,

¹ The *Knight's Tale* is a free adaptation of Boccaccio's *Teseide*, a much longer poem. Both are based after a fashion on the *Thebaid* of the late Roman poet, Statius.

² realm. ³ for the nonce — a colorless phrase.

⁴ must. ⁵ plough. ⁶ hinder. ⁷ weal, well-being.

Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
 A compagne of ladies, tweye and tweye, 40
 Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;
 But swich a cry and swich a wo they
 make,

That in this world nis creature livinge
 That herde swich another weymenting;⁸
 And of this cry they nolde never stenten,⁹
 Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.¹⁰

'What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-
 cominge

Perturben so my feste with cryinge?'
 Quod Theseus. 'Have ye so greet envye
 Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and
 crye?' 50

Or who hath yow misboden,¹¹ or offended?
 And tellethe me if it may been amended;
 And why that ye ben clothed thus in
 blak?'

The eldest lady of hem alle spak,
 When she hadde swowned with a deedly
 chere,

That it was routhe for to seen and here,
 And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath
 given

Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
 Noght greveth us your glorie and your
 honour;

But we biseken mercy and socour. 60

Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.
 Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,
 Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.
 For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle
 That she nath been a duchesse or a queene;
 Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:
 Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel,
 That noon estat assureth to be weel.

And certes, lord, t'abyden your presence,
 Here in the temple of the goddessse Cle-
 mence 70

We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might.

I wrecche, which that wepe and waille
 thus,

Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,
 That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
 And alle we, that been in this array,
 And maken al this lamentacioun,
 We losten alle our housbondes at that
 toun,

Why! that the sege ther-about lay.
 And yet now th'olde Creon, weylaway! 80
 The lord is now of Thebes the citee,
 Fulfil of ire and of iniquitee,

⁸ lament. ⁹ stint, stop. ¹⁰ seized. ¹¹ injured.

He, for despyt, and for his tyrannye,
 To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
 Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,¹
 Hath all the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
 And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,
 Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,²
 But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.³
 And with that word, with-outen more
 respyt,⁹⁰
 They fillen gruf,³ and cryden piteously,
 'Have on us wretched wommen som mercy,
 And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'

This gentil duk down from his courser
 sterte

With herte pitous, whan he herde hem
 speke.

Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
 Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat,⁴
 That whylom weren of so greet estat.
 And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
 And hem conforteth in ful good entente;¹⁰⁰
 And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe
 knight,

He wolde doon so ferforthly his might
 Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
 That al the peple of Greece sholde speke
 How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
 As he that hadde his deeth ful wel de-
 served.

And right anon, with-outen more abood,
 His baner he displayeth, and forth rood
 To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;
 No neer Athenes wolde he go ne ryde,¹¹⁰
 Ne take his ese fully half a day,
 But onward on his way that night he lay;
 And sente anon Ipolita the quene,
 And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,⁵
 Un-to the toun of Athenes to dwell;
 And forth he rit,⁶ ther nis namore to telle.

The rede statue of Mars, with spere and
 targe,

So shyneth in his whyte baner large,
 That alle the feeldes gliteren up and doun;
 And by his baner born is his penoun⁷ ¹²⁰
 Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-
 bete⁸

The Minotaur, which that he slough in
 Crete.

Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
 And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
 Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
 Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.

But shortly for to speken of this thing,
 With Creon, which that was of Thebes
 king,

He faught, and slough him manly as a
 knight

In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to
 flight;¹³⁰

And by assaut he wan the citee after,
 And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and
 rafter;

And to the ladyes he restoreth agayn
 The bones of hir housbondes that were
 slayn,

To doon obsequies as was tho the gyse.
 But it were al to long for to devyse
 The grete clamour and the waymentinge
 That the ladyes made at the brenninge
 Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
 That Theseus, the noble conquerour,¹⁴⁰
 Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him
 wente;

But shortly for to telle is myn entente.
 Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
 Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
 Stille in that feelde he took al night his
 reste,

And dide with al the contree as him leste.⁹
 To ransake in the tas¹⁰ of bodyes dede,
 Hem for to strepe of harneys and of
 wede,

The pilours¹¹ didnen bisnesse and cure,¹²
 After the bataille and disconfiture.¹⁵⁰
 And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,
 Thurgh-girt¹³ with many a grevous bloody
 wounde,

Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,¹⁴
 Bothe in oon armes,¹⁵ wrought ful richely,
 Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,
 And that other knight hight Palamon.

Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were,
 But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,
 The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
 As they that weren of the blood royal¹⁶⁰
 Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.

Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn,
 And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
 Of Theseus, and he ful son hem sente
 To Athenes, to dwellen in prisoun
 Perpetuelly, he nolde no raunsoun.
 And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-
 don,

He took his host, and hoom he rood anon

¹ slain. ² burned. ³ groveling, prone. ⁴ over-
 come. ⁵ fair. ⁶ rideth. ⁷ The pennon is triangular
 or swallow-tailed, the banner square. ⁸ embroidered.

⁹ list, pleased (impersonal). ¹⁰ heap. ¹¹ pillagers.
¹² care. ¹³ pierced. ¹⁴ lying close together.
¹⁵ bearing the same coat-of-arms.

With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
And there he liveth, in joye and in hon-
our, 170

Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in angwish and in wo,
Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by
day,

Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lillie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures
newe —

For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe, 180
I noot¹ which was the fairer of hem two —
Er it were day, as was hir wone² to do,
She was arisen, and al redy dight;
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observ-
aunce.'

This maked Emelye have remembrance
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse; 190
Hir yellow heer was broyded in a tresse,
Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,³
She walketh up and down, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and
strong,

Which of the castel was the chief don-
geoun,

(Ther-as the knyghtes weren in prisoun, 200
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evens joynant to the gardin-wal
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyng.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that mor-
weninge,

And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on
heigh,

In which he al the noble citee seigh,⁴
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene 210
Was in hir walk, and romed up and down.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;

That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a
barre

Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte,⁵ and cryde
'a!' 220

As though he stongen were un-to the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterde,
And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow? Who hath thee doon
offence?

For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be;
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
Some wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun, 230
Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it
sworn;⁶

So stood the heven whan that we were born;
We moste endure it: this is the short and
pleyn.'

This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
This prisoun caused me nat for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn
yē

In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see 240
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.
I noot wher⁷ she be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'
And ther-with-al on kneës down he fil,
And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may
scapen.

And if so be my destinee be shapen 250
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
Of our linage have som compassioun,
That is so lowe y-brought by tyrannye.'
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte
him so,

That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurte as muche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly 260
blenched. * sworn the contrary. 7 whether.

¹ know not. ² wont. ³ uprising. ⁴ saw.

Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'

This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously¹ he lokod, and answerde:

'Whether seistow this in earnest or in
pley?'

'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in earnest, by my
fey!

God help me so, me list ful yuele pleye.'

This Palamon gan knitte his browes
tweye: 270

'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet hon-
our

For to be fals, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother²
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,³
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hindren other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve⁴ brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, and I shal forthren thee. 280
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.
Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.⁵
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so.
I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have told biforn. 290
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might,
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'

This Arcite ful proudly spak ageyn,
'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals
than I;

But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;
For *par amour*⁶ I loved hir first er thow.
What wiltow seyn? Thou wistest nat yet
now

Whether she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccoun of holinesse, 300
And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure
As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.
I pose,⁷ that thou lovedest hir biforn;
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That "who shal yeve a lover any lawe?"

¹ Savagely. ² sworn brother in arms. ³ though
we should die by torture. ⁴ dear, lief. ⁵ die. ⁶ in
the way of a lover. ⁷ put the case.

Love is a greter lawe, by my pan,⁸
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree. 310
A man moot nedes love, maugree⁹ his heed.
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be
deed,

Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,
To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verrailly,
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly; us gayneth¹⁰ no raunsoun.
We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was
noon; 320

Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were
wrothe,

And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe.
And therefore, at the kinges court, my
brother,

Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prisoun mote we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure.'

Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem
tweye,

If that I hadde leyser for to seye; 330
But to th'effect. It happed on a day,
(To telle it yow as shortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,
That felawe was un-to duk Theseus
Sin tilke day that they were children
lyte,¹¹

Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,
And for to pleye, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man so:

And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.
So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn, 340
That whan that oon was deed, sothly to
telle,

His felawe wente and soghte him down in
helle;

But of that story list me nat to wryte.
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by
yere;

And fynally, at requeste and preyere
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,
In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal. 350

⁸ skull, head.
¹⁰ profits.

⁹ maugre, in spite of.
¹¹ little.

This was the forward, pleylnly for t'en-
 dyte,
 Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
 That if so were that Arcite were y-founde
 Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde¹
 In any contrée of this Theseus,
 And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
 That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed;
 Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,²
 But taketh his leve, and homward he him
 spedde;
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde!³
 How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
 The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte
 smyte; 362
 He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;
 To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
 He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was born!
 Now is my prison worse than biforn;
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle
 Noght in purgatorie, but in helle,
 Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!
 For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus 370
 Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.
 Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.
 Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,
 Though that I never hir grace may deserve,
 Wolde han sufficed right y-nough for me.
 O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,
 'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;⁴
 In prison? Certes nay, but in paradys!
 Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys,⁵
 That hast the sighte of hir, and I th'ab-
 sence, 381
 For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence,
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
 That by som cas, sin fortune is chaunge-
 able,
 Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.
 But I, that am exyled, and bareyne
 Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir,
 That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,
 Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
 That may me helpe or doon confort in
 this: 390
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope⁶ and dis-
 tresse;
 Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse!
 Allas, why pleyne folk so in commune
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
 Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?

¹ hour. ² help. ³ in pledge.
⁴ mayest thou endure. ⁵ dice. ⁶ despair.

Som man desyreth for to han richesse,
 That cause is of his mordre⁷ or greet sik-
 nesse.

And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,
 That in his hous is of his meynee⁸ slayn.
 Infinite harmes been in this matere; 401
 We witen nat what thing we preyen here.
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
 But he noot which the righte wey is thider;
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.⁹
 And certes, in this world so faren we;
 We seken faste after felicitee,
 But we goon wrong full often, trewely.
 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely¹⁰ I 410
 That wende¹¹ and hadde a greet opinioun,
 That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun,
 Than hadde I been in joye and perfit
 hele,¹²

Ther now I am exyled from my wele.
 Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
 I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'

Up-on that other syde Palamon,
 Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
 Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete
 tour

Resouneth of his youling and clamour. 420
 The pure¹³ fettres on his shines grete
 Weren of his bittre salte teres wete.
 'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcite, cosin myn,
 Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is
 thyn.

Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
 And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
 Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and
 manhede,

Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
 And make a werre so sharp on this citee,
 That by some aventure, or some tretee, 430
 Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
 For whom that I mot nedes lese¹⁴ my lyf.
 For, as by wey of possibilitee,
 Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
 And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
 More than is myn, that sterve here in a
 cage.

For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,
 With al the wo that prison may me yive,
 And eek with payne that love me yiveth
 also,
 That doubleth al my torment and my
 wo.' 440

⁷ murder. ⁸ servants. ⁹ slippery. ¹⁰ especially.
¹¹ weened, thought. ¹² health. ¹³ very. ¹⁴ must
 needs lose.

Ther-with the fyr of jelousye up-sterter
With-inne his brest, and hente him by the
herte

So woodyly,¹ that he lyk was to biholde
The box-tree, or the asshen dede and colde.
Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that gov-
erne

This world with binding of your word eterne,
And wyten in the table of athamaunt²
Your parlement,³ and your eterne graunt,
What is mankinde mofe un-to yow holde
Than is the sheep, that rouketh⁴ in the
folde. 450

For slayn is man right as another beste,
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!

What governaunce is in this prescience,
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfillle. 460
And whan a beest is deed, he hath no payne;
But man after his deeth moot wepe and
pleyne,

Though in this world he have care and wo:
With-outen doute it may stonden so.
Th' answer of this I lete to divynis,⁵
But wel I woot, that in this world gret
pyne is.

Allas! I see a serpent or a thief,
That many a trewe man hath doon mes-
cheef,
Goon at his large, and wher him list may
turne. 469

But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne,
And eek thurgh Juno, jealous and eek wood,
That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For jelousye, and fere of him Arcite.

Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle,
And of Arcite forth I wol yow telle.

The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge
Bothe of the love and the prisoner. 481
I noot which hath the wofullere mester.⁶
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun
Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed;
And Arcite is exyled upon his heed

For ever-mo as out of that contree,
Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.

Yow lovers axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Pala-
moun? 490

That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway.
That other wher him list may ryde or go,
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

*Explicit prima Pars.
Sequitur pars secunda.*

When that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful ofte a day he swelte⁷ and seyde 'allas,
For seen his lady shal he never-mo.
And shortly to concluden al his wo, 500
So muche sorwe had never creature
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may
dure.

His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
And wailing al the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be
stent; 510

So feeble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe
His speche nor his vois, though men it
herde.

And in his gere,⁸ for al the world he ferde
Nat oonly lyk the lovers maladye
Of Hereos,⁹ but rather lyk manye¹⁰
Engendred of humour malencolyk,
Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.¹¹
And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
Bothe habit and eek disposicioun 520
Of him, this woful love daun¹² Arcite.

What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This cruel torment, and this payne and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,
Him thoughte how that the winged god
Mercurie

Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.

⁷ swooned.

⁸ behavior.

⁹ A specific disease of lovers and such. See *Modern Philology*, xi, 491.

¹⁰ mania.

¹¹ An allusion to the mediæval notion of humors and a triple division of the brain. Cf. *Macbeth*, i, 7, 65.

¹² sir, *dominus*.

¹ madly. ² adamant. ³ decree. ⁴ huddles.
⁵ divines. ⁶ the more woful occupation, life.

His slepy yerde¹ in hond he bar uprighte;
 An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.
 Arrayed was this god (as he took keepe²)⁵³¹
 As he was whan that Argus took his sleep;
 And seyde him thus: 'To Athenës shalton
 wende;

Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'
 And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.
 'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'
 Quod he, 'to Athenës right now wol I fare;
 Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
 To see my lady, that I love and serve;
 In hir presence I recche nat to sterue.'⁵⁴⁰

And with that word he caughte a greet
 mirour,

And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,
 And saugh his visage al in another kinde.
 And right anon it ran him in his minde,
 That, sith his face was so disfigured
 Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
 He mighte wel, if that be bar him lowe,³
 Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,
 And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
 And right anon he chaunged his array,⁵⁵⁰
 And cladde him as a povre laborer,
 And al allone, save only a squyer,
 That knew his privetee and al his cas,
 Which was disgyssed povrely, as he was,
 To Athenës is he goon the nexte⁴ way.
 And to the court he wente up-on a day,
 And at the gate he profreth his servyse,
 To druge⁵ and drawe, what so men wol
 devyse.

And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
 He fil in office⁶ with a chamberleyn,⁵⁶⁰
 The which that dwelling was with Emelye;
 For he was wys, and coude soon aspye
 Of every servaunt, which that serveth
 here.

Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,
 For he was yong and mighty for the nones,
 And ther-to he was strong and big of bones
 To doon that any wight can him devyse.

A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
 Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
 And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte.
 But half so wel biloved a man as he⁵⁷¹
 Ne was ther never in court, of his degree;
 He was so gentil of condicioun,
 That thurghout al the court was his re-
 noun.

They seyden, that it were a charitee
 That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,

And putten him in worshipful servyse,
 Ther as he mighte his vertu exercyse.
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is
 spronge⁵⁷⁹

Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer
 That of his chambre he made him a squyer,
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
 And eek men broghte him out of his
 contree

From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he
 ladde,

And bar him so in pees and eek in worre,
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre.⁷
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,⁵⁹¹
 And speke I wol of Palamoun a lyte.

In derknesse and horrible and strong
 prisoun

This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,
 Forpynd,⁸ what for wo and for distresse;
 Who feleth double soor⁹ and hevinesse
 But Palamoun? that love destreyneth¹⁰ so,
 That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
 And eek therto he is a prisoner
 Perpetually, nocht only for a yeer.⁶⁰⁰
 Who coude ryme in English proprely
 His martirdom? For sothe, it am nat I;
 Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.

It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,
 The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn
 That al this storie tellen more pleyen,)
 Were it by aventure or destinee,
 (As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
 That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
 By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,⁶¹⁰
 And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;
 For he had yive his gayler drinke so
 Of a claree,¹¹ maad of a certeyn wyn,
 With nerotikes and opie¹² of Thebes fyn,
 That al that night, thogh that men wolde
 him shake,

The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;
 And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.
 The night was short, and faste by the day,
 That nedes-cost¹³ he moste him-selven hyde,
 And til a grove, faste ther besyde,⁶²⁰
 With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
 For shortly, this was his opinioun.
 That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
 And in the night than wolde he take his way

¹ sleep-causing rod. ² heed. ³ lived in obscurity.
⁴ shortest. ⁵ drudge. ⁶ took service.

⁷ dearer. ⁸ Greatly tormented. ⁹ sorrow. ¹⁰ per-
 secutes. ¹¹ spiced wine. ¹² opium. ¹³ necessarily.

To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;¹
And shortly, outhur he wolde lese his lyf,
Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;
This is th'effect and his entente pleyn.

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn, 630
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
Til that fortune had broght him in the
snare.

The bisy larke, messenger of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver drops, hanging on the leues.
And Arcite, that is in the court royal
With Theseus, his squyer principal, 640
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.
And, for to doon his observance to May,
Remembering on the poynt of his desyr,
He on a courser, startlynge² as the fyr,
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure, his way he gan to holde,
To maken him a gerland of the greves, 649
Were it of wodebinde or hawthorn-leues,
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:
'May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may.'
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he rometh up and down,
Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
For sore afered of his deeth was he. 660
No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte.
But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,
That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath
eres.'

It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,³
For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.⁴
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,
That was so ny to herkennen al his sawe,
For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.

Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily, 671
In-to a studie he fil sodeynly,
As doon thise lovers in hir queynte geres,⁵
Now in the croppe,⁶ now down in the breres,

¹ make war. ² skittish. Another reading is *stertyng*.
³ be circumspect, steadfast. ⁴ unexpectedly.
⁵ changeful ways, turns. ⁶ top.

Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,
Right so can gery⁷ Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day⁸
Is geful,⁷ right so chaungeth she array. 680
Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.

Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to
syke,⁹

And sette him down with-ouen any more:
'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?

Allas! y-broght is to confusioun
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphicoun;
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste
man 689

That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
And of the citee first was crowned king,
Of his linage am I, and his of-spring
By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
And now I am so caitif and so thral,
That he, that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squyer povrely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;
But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a
myte. 700

Allas! thou felle Mars, alas! Juno,
Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo,
Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,
That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
Love hath his fyry dart so breunningly
Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte,
That shapen was my deeth erst¹⁰ than my
sherte.

Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;
Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye. 710
Of al the remenant of myn other care
Ne sette I nat the mountaunce¹¹ of a tare
So that I coude don aught to your ple-
saunce!

And with that word he fil down in a trounce
A longe tyme; and after he up-sterte.

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh
his herte

He felte a cold sward sodeynliche glyde,
For ire he quook,¹² no lenger wolde he
byde.

And whan that he had herd Arcites tale, 719
As he was wood, with face deed and pale,

⁷ changeable. ⁸ i.e. Friday. ⁹ sigh. ¹⁰ ere, i.e.
his death was foreordained. ¹¹ amount. ¹² quaked.

He sterte him up out of the buskes thikke,
And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour wikke,¹
Now artow hent,² that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood, and to my counseil
sworn,

As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
And hast by-japed³ here duk Theseus,
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye, 730
But I wol love hir only, and namo;
For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo.
And though that I no wepne have in this
place,

But out of prison am astart by grace,
I drede noght that outhou thou shalt dye,
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat
asterte.'

This Arcite, with ful despitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale
herd,

As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd, 740
And seyde thus: 'By God that sit above,
Nere⁴ it that thou art sik, and wood for
love,

And eek that thou no wepne hast in this
place,

Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
For I defye the seurtee and the bond
Which that thou seyst that I have maad to
thee.

What, verray fool, think wel that love is
free,

And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight,
And wilnest to darreyne⁵ hir by batayle, 751
Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat
fayle,

With-outen witing of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneys right y-nough for
thee;

And chees the beste, and leve the worste
for me.

And mete and drinke this night wol I
bringe

Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy bed-
dinge.

And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
And slee me in this wode ther I am inne, 760

¹ wicked.² caught.³ fooled.⁴ Were it not.⁵ decide the right to.

Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for
me.'

This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it
thee.'

And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
When ech of hem had leyd his feith to
borwe.⁶

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!

O regne,⁷ that wolt no felawe have with
thee!

Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lordshipe
Wol noght, his thankes,⁸ have no felawe-
shipe;

Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.

Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun, 770

And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.

And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.

Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere, 781
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,
And hereth him come rusching in the
graves,

And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thinketh, 'Heer cometh my mortel
enemy,

With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;
For outhou I mot sleen him at the gappe,
Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe:'
So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem other knewe. 790

Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;⁹
But streight, with-outen word or rehersing,
Everich of hem halp¹⁰ for to armen other,
As frendly as he were his owne brother;
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
They foynen¹¹ ech at other wonder longe.
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun
In his fighting were a wood leoun,

And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gonne they to smyte, 800
That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.
Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle;
And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.

The destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over-al

⁶ pledged his faith.⁷ rule.⁸ willingly.⁹ saluting.¹⁰ helped.¹¹ thrust.

The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn,
So strong it is, that, though the world had
sworn

The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day 810
That fallethe nat eft with-inne a thousand
yere.

For certainly, our appetytes here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to honten is so desirous,
And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte¹ and horn, and houndes him
bisyde. 820

For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
That it is al his joye and appetyt
To been him-self the grete hertes bane:
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On hunting be they riden royally. 829
And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,
In which ther was an hert, as men him
tolde,

Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
And to the launde² he rydeth him ful right,
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,
With houndes, swiche as that him list com-
aunde.

And whan this duk was come un-to the
launde,

Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon, 840
That foughten breme,³ as it were bores
two;

The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
And pulled out a sward and cryed, 'Ho!
Namore, up⁴ payne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed 850
That smytheth any strook that I may seen!
But telleth me what mister⁵ men ye been,

¹ huntsman. ² glade. ³ furiously.
⁴ upon. ⁵ manner of.

That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-outen juge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally?'

This Palamon answerede hastily
And seyde: 'Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves; 860
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge;
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe
it lyte,

This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate. 870
Thus hath he japed⁶ thee full many a yeer,
And thou has made him thy chief squyer:
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleylnly my confessioun,
That I am thiike woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte. 880
Therefore I axe deeth and my juwyse;⁷
But slee my felawe in the same wyse,
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'

This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusion:
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth noght to pyne⁸ yow with the
corde.

Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the
rede!'

The quene anon, for verray womman-
hede, 890

Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye.
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir bloody woundes wyde and
sore;

And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us women
alle!'

And on hir bare knees adoun they falle, 900

⁶ deceived. ⁷ judgment. ⁸ torture.

And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterie,

He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause:

And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
As thus: he thoughte wel, that every man
Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can, ⁹¹⁰
And eek delivere him-self out of prison;
And eek his herte had compassioun
Of women, for they wepen ever in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'Fy
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede,
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede
As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan! ⁹²⁰
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in swich cas can no divisioun,
But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.'¹

And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes al on highte:—

'The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,

He may be cleped a god for his miracles; ⁹³⁰
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of everich herte, as that him list devyse.
Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
That quitly² weren out of my prison,
And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deeth lyth in my might also;
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Y-brought hem hider bothe for to dye!
Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye? ⁹⁴⁰
Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?

Thus hath hir lord, the god of love,
y-paid

Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse

¹ Regards them equally. ² entirely.

That serven love, for aught that may bifalle!

But this is yet the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me; ⁹⁵⁰
She woot namore of al this hote fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!
But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:

For in my tyme a servant³ was I oon.
And therefore, sin⁴ I knowe of loves payne,
And woot how sore it can a man distreynen,
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,⁵
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespass, ⁹⁶⁰
At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,
And eek of Emelye, my suster dere.
And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,⁶
Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may;
I yow foryeve this trespass every del.
And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,

And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde: ⁹⁷⁰

'To speke of royal linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,

Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye;
Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef; ⁹⁸⁰
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jelous, ne so wrothe.
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape; and herkneth in what wyse;

Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.

My wil is this, for plat⁷ conclusioun,
With-outen any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste ⁹⁹⁰

Frely, with-outen raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,⁸

³ i.e. of love.

⁴ since.

⁵ injure.

⁶ further nor nearer, more nor less, i.e. exactly.

⁷ certain.

⁸ lace, net.

Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred
 knightes,
 Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
 Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
 And this bihote I yow, with-outen faille,
 Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
 That whether¹ of yow bothe that hath
 might,
 This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
 May with his hundred, as I spak of
 now, 1000
 Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
 Him shal I yewe Emelya to wyve,
 To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a
 grace.
 The listes shal I maken in this place,
 And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
 As I shal even juge been and trewe.
 Ye shul non other ende with me maken,
 That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
 And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
 Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.²
 This is your ende and your conclu-
 sioun.' 1011

Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?
 Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
 Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
 The joye that is made in the place
 Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
 But down on knees wente every maner wight,
 And thanked him with al her herte and
 might,
 And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.³
 And thus with good hope and with herte
 blythe 1020
 They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne
 they ryde
 To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

*Explicit secunda pars.
 Sequitur pars tercia.*

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
 If I foryete to tellen the dispence
 Of Theseus, that goth so bisily
 To maken up the listes royally;
 That swich a noble theatre as it was,
 I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.
 The circuit a myle was aboute, 1029
 Walled of stoon, and diche al with-oute.
 Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
 Ful of degrees,⁴ the heighte of sixty pas,
 That, when a man was set on o degree,
 He letteth⁵ nat his felawe for to see.

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel
 whyt,
 West-ward, right swich another in the op-
 posit.
 And shortly to concluden, swich a place
 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
 For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
 That geometrie or ars-metrik⁶ can, 1040
 Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
 That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.
 And for to doon his ryte and sacrificyse,
 He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
 In worship of Venus, goddess of love,
 Don make⁷ an auter and an oratorie;
 And west-ward, in the minde and in mem-
 orie
 Of Mars, he maketh hath right swich an-
 other,
 That coste largely of gold a fother.⁸ 1050
 And north-ward, in a touret⁹ on the wal,
 Of alabastre whyt and reed coral
 An oratorie riche for to see,
 In worship of Dyane of chastitee,
 Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.
 But yet hadde I foryeten¹⁰ to devyse
 The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
 The shap, the countenance, and the figures,
 That weren in thise oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus maystow
 see 1060
 Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
 The broken slepes, and the sykes colde;¹¹
 The sacred teres, and the waymenting;¹²
 The fyry strokes of the desiring
 That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;
 The othes, that hir covenants assuren;
 Plesance and Hope, Desyr, Fool-hardi-
 nesse,
 Beantee and Youthe, Bauderie,¹³ Richesse,
 Charmes and Force, Lesinges,¹⁴ Flaterye,
 Dispense, Bisynesse, and Jelousye, 1070
 That wered of yelwe golde¹⁵ a gerland,
 And a cokkow sitting on hir hand;
 Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
 Lust and Array, and alle the circumstaunces
 Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,
 By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
 And mo¹⁶ than I can make of mencion.
 For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,
 Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
 Was shewed on the wal in portreying, 1080

⁶ arithmetic.

⁷ turret.

¹¹ cruel sighs.

¹⁴ lyings.

⁸ caused to be made.

¹⁰ Subjective, "I nearly forgot."

¹² lamentation.

¹⁵ marigolds.

⁹ load.

¹³ I nearly forgot.

¹⁶ more.

¹ which of the two.

² satisfied.

³ times.

⁴ steps.

⁵ hindered.

With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
 Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
 Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
 Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
 Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules —
 Th'enchauntements of Medea and Circes —
 Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
 The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.
 Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,
 Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardi-
 nesse, 1090

Ne may with Venus holde champartye;¹
 For as hir list the world than may she gye.
 Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir
 las, 1130

Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'
 Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
 And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.

The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
 Was naked fleting in the large see,
 And fro the navele doun all covered was
 With wawes² grene, and brighte as any
 glas. 1100

A citole³ in hir right hand hadde she,
 And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
 A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;
 Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
 Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
 Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;
 And blind he was, as it is ofte sene;
 A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.

Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle
 yow al

The portreiture, that was up-on the wal 1110
 With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the
 rede?

Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and
 brede,

Lyk to the estres⁴ of the grisly place
 That highte the grete temple of Mars in
 Trace,

In thilke colde frosty region,
 Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

First on the wal was peynted a foreste,
 In which ther dwelleth neither man ne
 beste,

With knotty knarry⁵ bareyn treës olde
 Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to bi-
 holde; 1120

In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,⁶
 As though a storm sholde bresten⁷ every
 bough:

And downward from an hille, under a bente,⁸
 Ther stood the temple of Mars armipo-
 tente,

Wroght al of burned steel, of which then-
 tree

Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
 And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese,⁹
 That it made al the gates for to rese.¹⁰

The northren light in at the dores shoon,
 For windowe on the wal ne was ther
 noon, 1130

Thurgh which men mighten any light dis-
 cerne.

The dores were alle of adamant eterne,
 Y-clenched overthwart and endelong¹¹
 With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,
 Every pilier, the temple to sustene,
 Was tonne-greet,¹² of iren bright and shene.

Ther saugh I first the derke imagining
 Of felonye, and al the compassing;

The cruel ire, reed as any glede;¹³ 1139
 The pykepurs, and eek the pale Drede;
 The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;

Theshepne¹⁴ brenning with the blake smoke;
 The treson of the mording in the bedde;

The open werre, with woundes al bibledde;
 Contek,¹⁵ with bloody knyf and sharp manace;

Al ful of chirking¹⁶ was that sory place.

The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,
 His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;

The nayl y-driven in the shode¹⁷ a-night;
 The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-
 right. 1150

Amiddes of the temple sat Meschaunce,
 With discomfort and sory contenance.

Yet saugh I Woodnesse¹⁸ laughing in his
 rage;

Armed Complaint, Out-hees,¹⁹ and fiers Out-
 rage.

The careyne²⁰ in the bush, with throte
 y-corve;²¹

A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm²²
 y-storve;²³

The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft;
 The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.

Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;²⁴
 The hunte²⁵ strangled with²⁶ the wilde beres;

The sowe frenen²⁷ the child right in the
 cradel; 1161

The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel.

⁸ grassy slope. ⁹ gust. ¹⁰ shake. ¹¹ crosswise
 and longwise. ¹² thick as a barrel. ¹³ hot coal.

¹⁴ barn. ¹⁵ Strife. ¹⁶ creaking. ¹⁷ parting of
 the hair. ¹⁸ Madness. ¹⁹ Alarm. ²⁰ carrion.

²¹ cut. ²² plague. ²³ dead. ²⁴ dancing.
²⁵ hunter. ²⁶ by. ²⁷ devour.

¹ equality, rivalry. ² waves. ³ a sort of harp.
⁴ interior. ⁵ gnarled. ⁶ soughing, murmur.
⁷ break.

Noght was foryeten by the infortune of
Marte;

The carter over-riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also, of Martes divisoun,¹
The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.²
And al above, depeynted in a tour, 1169
Saw I Conquest sittinge in greet honour,
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed.
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure;
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above, 1179
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, though I wolde.

The statue of Mars up-on a carte³ stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped⁴ in scriptures
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was arrayed thus:—
A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet; 1190
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge⁵ of Mars and of his glorie.

Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee.
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,⁶
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere, 1200
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre;⁷
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane,⁸ y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte
Dane.

Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,
For vengeance that he saugh Diane alnaked;
I saugh how that his houndes have him
caught,
And freten him, for that they knewe him
naught. 1210

¹ under the influence of Mars. ² anvil. ³ chariot.
⁴ termed. The reference here is to figures in geomancy.
See Skeat's note. ⁵ honouring. ⁶ Callisto. ⁷ further.
⁸ Daphne.

Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,⁹
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawn to memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone. 1220
In gaude¹⁰ grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke region.
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,
And seyde, 'Help, for thou mayst best of
alle.'

Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,
With many a florin he the hewes boghte. 1230
Now been these listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder
wel.¹¹

But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approacheth of hir retourninge,
That everich sholde an hundred knyghtes
bringe,
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde,
Hath everich of hem brought an hundred
knyghtes 1241

Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly, ther trowed many a man
That never, sithen that the world bigan,
As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,
As fer as God hath makid see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye.
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thankes,¹² han a passant¹³
name,
Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that
game; 1250

And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.
For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours,¹⁴ and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,
They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there,

⁹ further on. ¹⁰ dyed with weld. ¹¹ he was
wondrous well pleased. ¹² of his own free will.
¹³ surpassing. ¹⁴ as a right lover.

To fighte for a lady — benedicite!

It were a lusty sighte for to see.

And right so ferden they with Palamon.

With him ther wenten knyghtes many oon;

Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,¹ 1261

In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun;²

And somme woln have a peyre plates³
large;

And somme woln have a Puce⁴ sheld, or a
targe;

Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of
steel.

Ther nis no newe gyse that it nas old.

Armed were they, as I have you told,

Everich after his opinioun.

Ther maistow seen coming with Pala-
moun 1270

Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;

Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.

The cercles of his eyen in his heed,

They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed:

And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,

With kempe⁵ heres on his browes stoute;

His limes grete, his braunes harde and
stronge,

His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and
longe.

And as the gyse was in his contree,

Ful hye up-on a char⁶ of gold stood he, 1280

With foure whyte boles⁷ in the trays.

In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,

With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,

He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old,⁸

His longe heer was kembd⁹ bihinde his bak,

As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak:¹⁰

A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte,

Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,

Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.

Aboute his char ther wenten whyte
alaunts,¹¹ 1290

Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,

To huntun at the leoun or the deer,

And folwed him, with mosel¹² faste
y-bounde,

Colers¹³ of gold, and torets¹⁴ fyled rounde.

An hundred lordes hadde he in his route

Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and
stoute.

With Arcita, in stories as men finde,

The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,

¹ hauberk, coat of mail. ² tunic or surcoat. ³ for
breast and back. ⁴ Prussian. ⁵ shaggy. ⁶ chariot.
⁷ bulls. ⁸ very old. ⁹ combed; cf. *un-kempt*.

¹⁰ very black. ¹¹ wolf-hounds. ¹² muzzle. ¹³ collars.

¹⁴ swivel-rings.

Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in cloth of gold diaped¹⁵ weel, 1300

Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.

His cote-armure¹⁶ was of cloth of Tars,¹⁷

Couched¹⁸ with perles whyte and rounde
and grete.

His sadel was of brend¹⁹ gold newe y-bete;²⁰

A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge

Bret-ful²¹ of rubies rede, as fyr spark-
linge.

His crisepe²² heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,

And that was yelow, and glitered as the
sonne.

His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,²³

His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwynn,

A fewe fraknes²⁴ in his face y-spreynd,²⁵ 1311

Between yelow and somdel blak y-meynd,²⁶

And as a leoun he his loking caste.

Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.

His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;

His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.

Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene

A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.

Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,²⁷

An egle tame, as eny lillie whyt. 1320

An hundred lordes hadde he with him
there,

Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere,

Ful richely in alle maner thinges.

For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,

Were gadered in this noble companye,

For love and for encrees of chivalrye.

Aboute this king ther ran on every part

Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.

And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and
some,

Ben on the Sonday to the citee come 1330

Aboute pryme,²⁸ and in the toun alight.

This Theseus, this duk, this worthy
knight,

Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,

And inned²⁹ hem, everich in his degree,

He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour

To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,

That yet men weneth that no mannes wit

Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.

The minstrelaye, the service at the feste,

The grete yiftes to the moste and leste, 1340

The riche array of Theseus paleys,

Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,³⁰

¹⁵ diapered, patterned. ¹⁶ over-tunic bearing the
coat-of-arms. ¹⁷ oriental silk. ¹⁸ adorned. ¹⁹ bur-

nished. ²⁰ embossed, wrought. ²¹ brim-full, thick
set. ²² curly. ²³ green-yellow. ²⁴ freckles.

²⁵ scattered. ²⁶ mingled. ²⁷ disport. ²⁸ the
early part of the morning. ²⁹ lodged. ³⁰ days.

What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes ligen on the floor adoun:
Of al this make I now no mencion;
But al th'effect,¹ that thinketh me the beste;
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if
yow leste. ¹³⁵⁰

The Sonday night, er day bigan to
springe,

When Palamon the larke herde singe,
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
With holy herte, and with an heigh corage
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honourable and digne.²
And in hir houre³ he walketh forth a pas
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was, ¹³⁶⁰
And doun he kneleth, and with humble
chere

And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here.

'Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
Doughter to Jove and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,⁴
Have pitee of my bitire teres smerte,
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.
Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
Th'effectes ne the torments of myn helle; ¹³⁷⁰
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;⁵
I am so confus, that I can noght seye.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought, and seest what harmes that I
feel,

Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,
As wisly⁶ as I shal for evermore,
Emforth⁷ my might, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,⁸ ¹³⁸⁰
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris⁹ of armes blown up and doun,
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.
I recche nat, but it may bettre be,
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes. ¹³⁸⁹
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,

Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worshiþe evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,¹⁰
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.¹¹
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost
my lyf, ¹³⁹⁹

Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf.
This is th'effect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.'

Whan th'orisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay, ¹⁴¹⁰
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his
bone;
And with glad herte he wente him hoom
ful sone.

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.
Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde,
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Th'encens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifice longen¹² shal; ¹⁴²⁰
The hornes fulle of meth,¹³ as was the gyse;
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrificse.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game to heren al;
To him that meneth wel, it were no
charge.¹⁴

But it is good a man ben at his large.¹⁵ ¹⁴³⁰
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
A coroune of a grene ook cerial¹⁶
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes,¹⁷ and thise bokes olde.
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.

¹ to the main matter. ² worthy.
³ Each planet had its potent hour in the day.
⁴ Adonis. ⁵ reveal. ⁶ certainly.
⁷ According to. ⁸ care not to boast. ⁹ fame.

¹⁰ whether I ride or walk. ¹¹ kindly. ¹² belong.
¹³ mead. ¹⁴ no affliction. ¹⁵ be free (to tell or not).
¹⁶ a kind of oak. ¹⁷ i.e. in the *Thebaid* of Statius.

'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe heven and erthe and see is
sene,¹

1440

Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast
knowe

Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keep me fro thy vengeance and thyn
ire,

That Attheon aboughte² cruelly.

Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I

Desire to been a mayden al my lyf,

Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.

I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,¹⁴⁴⁹

A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,

And for to walken in the wodes wilde,

And noght to been a wyf, and be with
childe.

Noght wol I knowe companye of man.

Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,

For tho thre formes³ that thou hast in thee.

And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,

And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,

This grace I preye thee with-oute more,

As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;

And fro me turne away hir hertes so,¹⁴⁶⁰

That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,

And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr

Be queynt,⁴ or turned in another place;

And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,

Or if my destinee be shapen so,

That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,

As sende me him that most desireth me.

Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,

The bitter teres that on my chekes falle.

Sin thou art mayde, and keper of us alle,¹⁴⁷⁰

My maydenhede thou kepe and wel con-
serve,

And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.⁵

The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,

Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;

But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,

For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,⁶

And quiked agayn, and after that anon

That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;

And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,

As doon thise wete brondes in hir bren-
ninge,¹⁴⁸⁰

And at the brondes ende out-ran anon

As it were bloody dropes many oon;

For which so sore agast was Emelye,

That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,

For she ne wiste what it signified;

But only for the fere thus bath she cryed,

And weep, that it was pitee for to here.

And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,

With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,

And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevi-
nesse.¹⁴⁹⁰

Among the goddes hye it is affermed,

And by eterne word write and confermed,

Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho

That han for thee so muchel care and wo;

But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.

Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.

The fyres which that on myn auter brenne

Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,⁶

Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'

And with that word, the arwes in the
cas¹⁵⁰⁰

Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,

And forth she wente, and made a vanissh-
inge;

For which this Emelye astoned was,

And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!

I putte me in thy proteccioun,

Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'

And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye.

This is th'effect, ther is namore to seye.

The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,

Arcite un-to the temple walked is¹⁵¹⁰

Of fiersse Mars, to doon his sacrificyse,

With alle the rytes of his payen weye.

With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,

Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:

'O stronge god, that in the regnes colde

Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,

And hast in every regne and every lond

Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,

And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,

Accept of me my pitous sacrificyse.¹⁵²⁰

If so be that my youthe may deserve,

And that my might be worthy for to serve

Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,

Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.

For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,

In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,

Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee

Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,

And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,

Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille⁷¹⁵³⁰

Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,⁸

And fond thee ligging⁹ by his wyf, allas!

For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,

Have rounthe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.

¹ visible.

² paid for, suffered for.

³ Diana, Luna, and Proserpina. Cf. l. 1440.

⁴ quenched (p.p.).

⁵ quenched (past tense).

⁶ hence.

⁷ lace, net.

⁸ you once had bad luck.

⁹ lying.

I am yong and unkonning,¹ as thou wost,
 And, as I trowe, with love offended most,
 That ever was any lyves² creature;
 For she, that dooth³ me al this wo endure,
 Ne recbeth never wher I sinke or flete⁴
 And wel I woot, er she me mercy
 hete,⁵ 1540
 I moot⁶ with strengthe winne hir in the
 place;
 And wel I woot, withouten help or grace
 Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
 Than helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
 For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,
 As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
 And do that I to-morwe have victorie.
 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the
 glorie!

Thy soverain temple wol I most honouren
 Of any place, and alwey most labouren 1550
 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,
 And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,
 And alle the armes of my companye;
 And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,
 Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.
 And eek to this avow I wol me binde:
 My berd, myn heer that hongeth long
 adoun,

That never yet ne felte offensioun
 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
 And been thy trewe servant whyl I live.
 Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes
 sore, 1561

Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.'

The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
 The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,
 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
 Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.
 The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte,
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,⁷ 1570
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk
 ringe.

And with that soun he herde a murmur-
 inge
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Vic-
 torie':
 For which he yaf to Mars honour and
 glorie.

And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,

As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.

And right anon swich stryf ther is bi-
 gonne 1580

For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
 Bitwixe Venus, the goddessse of love,
 And Mars, the sterne god armipotente,
 That Jupiter was bisy it to stente;
 Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
 That knew so many of adventures olde,
 Fond in his olde experience an art,
 That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
 As sooth is sayd, elde⁸ hath greet advantage;
 In elde is bothe wisdom and usage; 1590
 Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-
 rede.⁹

Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede,
 Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
 Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.

'My dere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,
 'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,¹⁰
 Hath more power than wot any man.
 Myn is the drenching¹¹ in the see so wan;
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;¹²
 Myn is the strangling and hanging by the
 throte; 1600

The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
 The groynyn,¹³ and the pryvee empoysoun-
 ing;

I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
 Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the Leoun.
 Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
 The falling of the toures and of the walles
 Up-on the mynour or the carpenter.
 I slow Sampson in shaking the piler;
 And myne be the maladyes colde,¹⁴
 The derke tresons, and the castes¹⁵ olde;
 My lokyn is the fader of pestilence. 1611
 Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence
 That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
 Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.¹⁶
 Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet
 nathelees

Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
 Al be ye noght of o complexioun,¹⁷
 That causeth al day swich divisoun.
 I am thin ayel,¹⁸ redy at thy wille;
 Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust ful-
 fille.' 1620

Now wol I stinten of the goddess above,
 Of Mars, and of Venus, goddessse of love,
 And telle yow, as pleyntly as I can,
 The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

⁸ old age. ⁹ out-run but not out-wit. ¹⁰ has a large orbit. ¹¹ drowning. ¹² out-building. ¹³ grumbling. ¹⁴ sinister. ¹⁵ tricks. ¹⁶ promised. ¹⁷ disposition. ¹⁸ grandfather.

¹ unknowing. ² live. ³ causes. ⁴ float.
⁵ promise. ⁶ must. ⁷ up-heaved.

*Explicit tercia pars.
Sequitur pars quarta.*

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich pleasure,
That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse ¹⁶³⁰
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wente they at night.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute;
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys.
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
So uncouth ¹ and so riche, and wroght so weel ¹⁶³⁹
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, ² and of steel;
The sheeldes brighte, testers, ³ and trap-pures; ⁴
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures;
Lordes in paraments ⁵ on hir courseres,
Knichtes of retenue, and eek squyeres
Nailinge ⁶ the speres, and helmes bokelinges,
Gigginge ⁷ of sheeldes, with layneres ⁸ lacinge;
Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel;
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikinge ⁹ to and fro; ¹⁶⁵⁰
Yemen ¹⁰ on fote, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakers, ¹¹ clariounes,
That in the bataille blowne body sounes;
The paleys ful of peples up and down,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Divyninge of thise Theban knightes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, ¹² somme with the thikke-herd; ¹⁶⁶⁰

¹ strange, rare. ² embroidery. ³ head-pieces for man or steel. ⁴ trappings. ⁵ rich robes. ⁶ fitting the heads? ⁷ fitting the gages or straps within. ⁸ lances, thongs. ⁹ spurring, hurrying. ¹⁰ Yeoman. ¹¹ kettle-drums. ¹² bald. ¹³ thick-haired.

Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;
He hath a sparth ¹⁴ of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.
The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
With minstrelaye and noyse that was maked,
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe yliche ¹⁵
Honoured, were into the paleys fet. ¹⁶
Duk Theseus was at a window set, ¹⁶⁷⁰
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preeseth thider-ward ful sone
Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an ho, ¹⁷
Til al the noyse of peple was y-do;
And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,
Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.
The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
Considered, that it were destruccioun ¹⁶⁸⁰
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;
Wherefor, to shapen that they shul not dye,
He wol his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfor, up ¹⁸ peyne of los of lyf,
No maner shot, ¹⁹ ne pollax, ²⁰ ne short knyf
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe;
Ne short swerd for to stoke, ²¹ with poynt bytynge,
No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde ¹⁶⁹⁰
But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;
Foyne, ²² if him list, on fote, him-self to were. ²³
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be brought un-to the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;
But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
On either syde, or elles slee his make, ²⁴
No longer shal the turneyinge laste.
God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on faste. ¹⁷⁰⁰

¹⁴ battle-axe. ¹⁵ alike. ¹⁶ fetched. ¹⁷ cry. ¹⁸ upon. ¹⁹ shooting weapon, such as a crossbow. ²⁰ pole-axe. ²¹ stab. ²² fence, ward. ²³ defend. ²⁴ fellow, i.e. rival.

With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.

Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.'

The voys of peple touchede the hevene;
So loude cryden they with mery stevene:

'God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccoun of blood!'

Up goon the trompes and the melodye.

And to the listes rit¹ the companye
By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with
sarge.² 1710

Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde;
And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
And after that another companye

Of oon and other, after hir degree.

And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
And to the listes come they by tyme.

It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,³

Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ipolita the quene and Emelye, 1720
And other ladies in degrees⁴ aboute.

Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.

And west-ward, thurgh the gates under
Marte,

Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,

With baner reed is entred right anon;

And in that selve⁵ moment Palamon

Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,

With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.

In al the world, to seken up and doun,

So even with-outen variacioun, 1730

Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.

For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye,

That any hadde of other avauntage

Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,

So even were they chosen, for to gesse.

And in two renges⁶ faire they hem dresse.

Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,

That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,

Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude:

'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes
proudel!' 1740

The heraudes lefte hir priking up and
doun;

Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;

Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est

In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;⁷

In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.

Ther seen men who can juste, and who can
ryde;

Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke;
He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon⁸ the
prikke. 1748

Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;

Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.

The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;

Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes
rede.

With mighty maces the bones they to-
breste.⁹

He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan
threste,¹⁰

Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun
goth al.

He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.

He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun,¹¹

And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.

He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen
y-take,

Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the
stake; 1760

As forward¹² was, right ther he moste abyde;

Another lad is on that other syde.

And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,

Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.

Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two

Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo;

Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.

Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgo-
pheye,

Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is
lyte,¹³

So cruel on the hunte,¹⁴ as is Arcite 1770

For jelous herte upon this Palamoun:

Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun,

That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,

Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,

As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.

The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;

Out renneth blood on both hir sydes rede.

Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;

For er the sonne un-to the reste wente, 1779

The stronge king Emetreus gan hente¹⁵

This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,

And made his swerd depe in his flesh to
byte;

And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden,¹⁶ and y-drawe unto the stake.

And in the rescous¹⁷ of this Palamoun

The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;

And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,

Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,

⁸ breast, brisket.

⁹ smash.

¹⁰ thrust.

¹¹ defends himself with his broken lance-butt.

¹² agreement.

¹³ little.

¹⁴ hunter.

¹⁵ seize.

¹⁶ unyielding.

¹⁷ rescue.

¹ rideth.

² coarse cloth.

³ mid-morn.

⁴ tiers.

⁵ very.

⁶ ranks.

⁷ The spears were lowered firmly into the rest.

So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
But al for noght, he was brought to the
stake. ¹⁷⁹⁰

His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eek by composicioun.¹

Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon
He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
I wol be trewe juge, and no partye.

Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye, ¹⁸⁰⁰
That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.²
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
For joye of this, so loude and heigh with-
alle,

It semed that the listes sholde falle.

What can now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this queene
of love?

But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
Til that hir teres in the listes fille;
She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.' ¹⁸⁰⁹
Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy pees.
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his
bone.'²

And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.³

The trompes, with the loude minstrelcy,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle³ and crye,
Been in hir wele,⁴ for joye of daun⁵ Arcite.
But herkneeth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon.

This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place, ¹⁸²⁰
Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë,
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune);⁶
And was al his in chiere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;
And, er that Arcite may taken keep, ¹⁸³⁰
He pighte⁷ him on the pomel⁸ of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
His brest to-brosten⁹ with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place

With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.

Tho was he corven¹⁰ out of his harneys,
And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,¹¹
For he was yet in memorie¹² and alyve, ¹⁸⁴⁰
And alway crying after Emelye.

Duk Theseus, with al his companye,
Is comen boon to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde¹³ noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye;
He shal ben heled of his maladye.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn, ¹⁸⁵⁰
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest-
boon.¹⁴

To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden
charmes;

Fermacies¹⁵ of herbes, and eek save¹⁶
They dronken, for they wolde hir Mmes
have.

For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe night,
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right. ¹⁸⁶⁰
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
But as a justes or a tourneyinge;
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For falling nis nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take,
O persone allone, with-outen mo,
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek
knaves, ¹⁸⁷⁰

It nas aretted¹⁷ him no vileinye,
Ther mav no man clepen it cowardye.

For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,
The gree¹⁸ as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as othere brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feste dayes three;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee¹⁹ largely. ¹⁸⁸⁰
And hoom wente every man the righte
way.

Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good
day!'

¹⁰ cut. ¹¹ quickly. ¹² conscious. ¹³ would not.
¹⁴ Whose breast was pierced. ¹⁵ Prescriptions.
¹⁶ salvia, sage. ¹⁷ imputed.
¹⁸ standing, superiority. ¹⁹ day's march.

¹ agreement. ² boon. ³ yell. ⁴ weal, happiness.
⁵ sir. ⁶ Several good MSS. omit these two lines.
⁷ pitched. ⁸ top. ⁹ broken.

Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelthe the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreeseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,¹
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk² y-laft,
That neither veyne-blood,³ ne ventusinge,⁴
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge.
The vertu expulsif, or animal, ¹⁸⁹¹
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural⁵

Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.
The pyper of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte⁶ in his brest adoun
Is shent⁷ with venim and corrupcioun.
Him gayneth⁸ neither, for to gete his lyf,
Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
Al is to-brosten⁹ thilke region,
Nature hath now no dominacioun. ¹⁹⁰⁰

And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to
chirche!

This al and som, that Arcite mot dye,
For which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.

'Naught may the woful spirit in myn
herte

Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love most;
But I biquethe the service of my gost ¹⁹¹⁰
To yow aboven every creature,
Sin that my lyf may no longer dure.

Allas, the wo! alas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! alas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our companye!

Allas, myn hertes quene! alas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to
have?

Now with his love, now in his colde grave ¹⁹²⁰
Allone, with-outen any companye.

Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye!
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.

I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my jelousye.
And Jupiter so wis my soule gye,¹⁰

To spoken of a servant¹¹ proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely, ¹⁹³⁰
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and
knighthede,

Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh
kinrede,

Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf.
And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.
And with that word his speche faille gan, ¹⁹⁴⁰
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deeth, that hadde him over-
come.

And yet more-over, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Gan failen, when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth.
But on his lady yet caste he his yë;
His laste word was, 'Mercy, Emelye!' ¹⁹⁵⁰
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I can never, I can nat tellen wher.
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinisre;¹²
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they
dwellen.

Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;¹³
Now wol I spoken forth of Emelye.

Shrighte¹⁴ Emelye, and howleth Pala-
mon,

And Theseus his suster took anon ¹⁹⁶⁰
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and
morwe?

For in swich cas wommen have swich
sorwe,

Whan that hir housbonds been from hem
ago,

That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certainly they dye.

Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres, ¹⁹⁷⁰
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man;
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-slayn,

11 lover. 12 diviner. 13 guide. 14 Shrieked.

¹ clotted blood, in spite of all the art of physicians.

² body, trunk. ³ blood-letting. ⁴ cupping.

⁵ Besides the animal and the natural virtues, there

⁶ is a third, the vital, which is mentioned in l. 1944.

⁷ muscle. ⁸ ruined. ⁹ It avails him.

¹⁰ completely crushed.

¹¹ As surely as I wish Jupiter to guide my soul.

To Troye; alas ! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching¹ of chekes, rending eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen
crye,

'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'

No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savinge his olde fader Egeus, ¹⁹⁸⁰

That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.

'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod
he,

'That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man,' he seyde,
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne
deyde.

This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and
fro; ¹⁹⁹⁰

Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorthe
The peple, that they sholde hem recon-
forte.

Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture²
Of good Arcite may best y-made be,
And eek most honorable in his degree.

And at the laste he took conclusioun, ¹⁹⁹⁹

That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fyr, in which th'office
Funeral he mighte al accompyce;
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and
hewe

The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons³ wel arrayed for to brenne;
His officers with swifte feet they renue
And ryde anon at his comaundement. ²⁰¹¹
And after this, Theseus hath y-sent
After a bere,⁴ and it al over-spradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he
hadde.

And of the same suyte⁵ he cladde Arcite;
Upon his bondes hadde he gloves whyte;
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and
kene.

¹ Scratching.

² The burial rites which follow are taken largely
from the *Thebaid* of Statius.

³ piles.

⁴ bier.

⁵ suit.

He leyde him, bare the visage, on the bere,
Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.

And for the peple sholde seen him alle, ²⁰²¹
Whan it was day, he broghte him to the
halle,

That roreth of the crying and the soun.

Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With flotery⁶ berd, and ruggy⁷ assy heres,
In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye,
The rewfulleste of al the companye.

In as muche as the service sholde be ²⁰²⁹
The more noble and riche in his degree,
Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,
That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Up-on thise stedes, that weren grete and
whyte,

Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his
sheeld,

Another his spere up in his bondes heeld;
The thridde bar with him his bowe Tur-
keys,

Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the
harneys;

And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here. ²⁰⁴⁰
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere,
With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder
hye

Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.⁸

Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus,
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn; ²⁰⁵⁰
Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;
And after that cam woful Emelye,
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the
gyse,

To do th'office of funeral servyse.

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparailinge
Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
That with his grene top the heven raughte,⁹
And twenty fadme of brede¹⁰ the armes
straughte; ¹¹

This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree¹² first ther was leyd ful many a
lode. ²⁰⁶⁰

But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte,

⁶ flowing.

⁷ rough.

⁸ decked.

⁹ reached.

¹⁰ in breadth.

¹¹ stretched.

¹² straw.

As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm,
popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn,¹ lind,
laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippel-²
tree,

How they weren feld, shal nat be told for
me;

Ne how the goddes ronnen up and down,
Disherited of hir habitacioun,
In which they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;³ 2070

Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched⁴ first with
stree,

And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
And than with grene wode and spycerye,
And than with cloth of gold and with
perrye.⁶

And gerlandes hanging with ful many a
flour,

The mirre, th'encens, with al so greet
odour; 2080

Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made the
fyr,

Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
Ne what jeweles men in the fyr tho caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente
faste;

Ne how som caste hir⁶ sheeld, and som
hir spere,

And of hir vestiments, whiche that they
were, 2090

And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and
blood,

Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thryës riden al the fyr aboute

Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryës with hir speres clateringe;

And thryës how the ladies gonne crye;
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;

Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde 2100

Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;

Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best, in no disjoynt.⁷
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn
yeres

Al stinted is the moorning and the teres. 2110
Of Grekes, by oon general assent,

Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was
To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,

Unwist of him⁸ what was the cause and
why;

But in his blake clothes sorwefully 2120
He cam at his comaundement in hye.⁹

Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
Whan they were set, and hust¹⁰ was al the
place,

And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,¹¹
And with a sad visage he syked¹² stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.

'The firste moevere of the cause above,¹³
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of
love, 2130

Greet was th'effect, and heigh was his en-
tente;

Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he
mente;

For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond

In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;
That same prince and that moevere, quod

he,
'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world
adoun,

Certeine dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place, 2139

Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;

Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge,
For it is preved by experience,

But that me list declaren my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,

That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.

⁷ failure.

⁸ He being ignorant.

⁹ haste.

¹⁰ hushed.

¹¹ pleasure.

¹² sighed.

¹³ The passage is from various parts of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius.

¹ chestnut.

² cornel.

³ Hamadryads.

⁴ laid.

⁵ jewelry.

⁶ their.

Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
 That every part deryveth from his hool.
 For nature hath nat take his beginning
 Of no party ne cantel¹ of a thing, ²¹⁵⁰
 But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
 Descending so, til it be corrumpable.
 And therefore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
 That spesce of thinges and progressiouns
 Shullen enduren by successiouns,
 And nat eterne be, with-oute lyē:
 This maistow understonde and seen at yē.

‘Lo the ook, that hath so long a noris-
 shinge ²¹⁵⁹

From tyme that it first biginneth springe,
 And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
 Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.

‘Considereth eek, how that the harde
 stoon

Under our feet, on which we trede and
 goon,

Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
 The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
 The grete tounes see we wane and wende.
 Than may ye see that al this thing hath
 ende.

‘Of man and womman seen we wel also,
 That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,
 This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age, ²¹⁷¹
 He moot ben deed, the king as shal a
 page;

Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
 Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
 Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
 Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot
 deye.

What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
 The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
 Converting al un-to his propre welle,
 From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.
 And here-agayns no creature on lyve ²¹⁸¹
 Of no degree availleth for to stryve.

‘Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
 To maken vertu of necessitee,
 And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
 And namely that to us alle is due.
 And who-so gruccheth² ought, he dooth
 folye,

And rebel is to him that al may gye.
 And certainly a man hath most honour
 To dyen in his excellence and flour, ²¹⁹⁰
 Whan he is siker of his gode name;
 Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no
 shame.

¹ fragment.² murmurs.

And gladder oghte his freend ben of his
 deeth,

Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
 Than whan his name apalled³ is for age;
 For al forgeten is his vasselage.⁴

Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
 To dyen whan that he is best of name.
 The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
 Why grucchen we? why have we hevi-
 nesse ²²⁰⁰

That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour,
 Departed is, with duetee and honour,
 Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
 Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
 Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
 Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a
 deel,

That bothe his soule and eek hem-self of-
 fende,

And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.

‘What may I conclude of this longe
 serie,

But, after wo, I rede us to be merie, ²²¹⁰
 And thanken Jupiter of al his grace?

And, er that we departen from this place,
 I rede⁵ that we make, of sorwes two,
 O parfyt joye, lasting ever-mo;
 And loketh now, wher most sorwe is her-
 inne,

Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.

‘Suster,’ quod he, ‘this is my fulle as-
 sent,

With al th’avyys heer of my parlement,
 That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
 That serveth yow with wille, herte, and
 might, ²²²⁰

And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him
 knewe,

That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him
 rewe,

And taken him for housbonde and for
 lord:

Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.

Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.

He is a kinges brother sone, pardee;

And, though he were a povre bachelor,⁶

Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,

And had for yow so greet adversitee,

It moste been considered, leveth me; ²²³⁰

For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.’

Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;

‘I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning

To make yow assente to this thing.

³ faded.⁵ advise.⁴ prowess.⁶ i.e. below a knight.

Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.¹
 Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
 That highte matrimoine or mariage,
 By al the counseil and the baronage.
 And thus with alle blisse and melodye
 Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye. 2240

And God, that al this wyde world hath
 wrought,
 Sende him his love, that hath it dere
 a-boght.

For now is Palamon in alle wele,
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;
 And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
 And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
 That never was ther no word hem bitwene
 Of jelousye, or any other tene.
 Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
 And God save al this faire companye! —
 Amen. 2250

Here is ended the Knights Tale.

THE PRIORESSES TALE

THER was in Asie, in a greet citee,
 Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,¹
 Sustened by a lord of that contree
 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or
 wende,
 For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther
 were
 Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen
 blood, 10
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer
 Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
 As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among these children was a widwes sone,
 A litel clergeon,² seven yeer of age,
 That day by day to scole was his wone,³
 And eek also, wher-as he saugh th' image
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and
 seye 20
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

¹ The sharply defined Jewish quarter of a mediæval town.

² clerk, cleric.

³ custom.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
 To worshiþe ay, and he forgat it naught,
 For sely⁴ child wol alday sone lere;⁵
 But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
 Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
 For he so yong to Crist did reverence.⁶

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer, 30
 He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
 As children lerned hir antiphoner;⁷
 And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and
 ner,⁸
 And herked ay the wordes and the note,
 Til he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
 For he so yong and tendre was of age;
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye
 T'expounden him this song in his langage,
 Or telle him why this song was in usage; 40
 This preye he him to construe and declare
 Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes⁹ bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
 Answerde him thus: 'This song, I have
 herd seye,
 Was maked of our blisful lady free,
 Hir to salue,¹⁰ and eek hir for to preye
 To been our help and socour whan we deye.
 I can no more expounde in this matere;
 I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence 50
 Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
 'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
 To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;
 Though that I for my prymer shal be
 shent,¹¹
 And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
 I wol it conne, our lady for to honour.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
 Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
 And than he song it wel and boldly
 Fro word to word, acordig with the note;
 Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte, 60
 To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
 On Cristes moder set was his entente.

⁴ innocent, good.

⁵ learn.

⁶ As a young infant St. Nicholas could not suck on Wednesdays or Fridays.

⁷ book of responsive songs, anthems.

⁸ nearer and nearer.

⁹ knees.

¹⁰ hail, greet.

¹¹ scolded.

As I have seyð, thurgh-out the Jewerye
 This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
 Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
 The swetnes hath his herte perced so
 Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
 He can nat stinte of singing by the weye. 70

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
 That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
 Up swal,¹ and seide, 'O Hebraik peple,
 allas!

Is this to yow a thing that is honest,²
 That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sen-
 tence,
 Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspyred
 This innocent out of this world to chace;
 An homicyde ther-to han they hyred, 80
 That in an alei hadde a privee place;
 And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
 This cursed Jew him hente and heeld him
 faste,

And kitte his throte, and in a pit him
 caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe³ they him threwe
 Wher-as these Jewes purgen hir entraille.
 O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
 What may your yvel entente yow availle?
 Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
 And namely ther th'onour of God shal
 sprede, 90
 The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souted⁴ to virginitee,
 Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon
 The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,
 'Of which the grete evangelist, seint John,
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they
 that goon

Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
 That never, fleshly, women they ne knewe.'

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght; 100
 For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
 With face pale of drede and bisy thought,
 She bath at scole and elles-where him soght,
 Til finally she gan so fer espye
 That he last seyn was in the Jewerye.

¹ swelled.
² privy.

³ decent.
⁴ devoted.

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir
 minde,

To every place wher she hath supposed
 By lykliheðe hir litel child to finde; 109
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
 Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

She frayneth⁵ and she preyeth pitously
 To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place,
 To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by.
 They seyde, 'nay'; but Jesu, of his grace,
 Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
 That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude 120
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
 Ther he with throte y-corven⁶ lay upright,⁷
 He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe
 So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete
 wente,

In comen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
 And hastily they for the provost sente;
 He cam anon with-outen taryng, 130
 And herieth⁸ Crist that is of heven king,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
 And after that, the Jewes leet he binde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
 Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
 And with honour of greet processcioun
 They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
 His moder swowning by the bere lay;
 Unnethe⁹ might the peple that was there
 This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere. 140

With torment and with shameful deth echon
 This provost dooth thise Jewes for to
 sterve¹⁰

That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
 He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.¹¹
 Yvel shal have that yvel wol deserve.
 Therfor with wilde hors¹² he dide hem
 drawe,¹³

And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

⁵ inquires. ⁸ carved, cut.
⁷ on his back. ⁹ praiseth.
⁸ Scarcely. ¹⁰ die.
¹¹ countenance. ¹² horses.
¹³ i.e. to the place of execution.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
 Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
 And after that, the abbot with his cov-
 ent ¹⁵⁰
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
 And whan they holy water on him caste,
 Yet spak this child, whan spreyn¹ was
 holy water,
 And song — ‘*O Alma redemptoris mater!*’

This abbot, which that was an holy man
 As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
 This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
 And seyde, ‘O dere child, I halse² thee,
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe, ¹⁶⁰
 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my sem-
 inge?’

‘My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,’
 Seyde this child, ‘and, as by wey of kinde,
 I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon;
 But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
 Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde;
 And, for the worship of his moder dere,
 Yet may I singe “*O Alma*” loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
 I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;³ ¹⁷⁰
 And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,⁴
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
 This antem verraily in my deyinge,
 As ye han herd; and, whan that I had
 songe,
 Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my
 tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,
 Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn.
 And afterward thus seyde she to me,
 “My litel child, now wol I fecche thee ¹⁸⁰
 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge
 y-take;
 Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.”’

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
 Him tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the
 greyn,
 And he yaf up the goost ful softly.
 And whan this abbot had this wonder
 seyn,
 His salte teres trikkled down as reyn,

¹ sprinkled. ² conjure.
³ as well as I knew how. ⁴ forsake.

And gruf⁵ he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
 And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement ¹⁹⁰
 Weping, and herien⁶ Cristes moder dere;
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben
 went,
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
 Enclosen they his litel body swete;
 Ther he is now, God leve us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
 With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable, ²⁰⁰
 That, of his mercy, God so merciable
 On us his grete mercy multiplie,
 For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen.

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS

Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to Chaucer

WHAN seyde was al this miracle, every man
 As sobre was, that wonder was to see,
 Til that our hoste jape⁷ tho bigan,
 And than at erst he looked up-on me,
 And seyde thus, ‘What man artow?’ quod
 he;
 ‘Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
 For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.
 Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have
 place;

He in the waast is shape as wel as I; ²⁰
 This were a popet in an arm t’enbrace
 For any womman, smal and fair of face.
 He semeth elvish by his contenance,
 For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han sayd;
 Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anon;’ —
 ‘Hoste,’ quod I, ‘ne beth nat yvel apayd,⁸
 For other tale certes can I noon,
 But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.’
 ‘Ye, that is good,’ quod he; ‘now shul we
 here ²⁰
 Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his
 chere.’

⁵ groveling, i.e. upon his face. ⁶ praise.
⁷ jest. ⁸ be not ill-pleased.

SIR THOPAS

Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas

LISTETH, lordes, in good entent,
 And I wol telle verrayment
 Of mirthe and of solas;
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent
 In bataille and in tourneyment,
 His name was sir Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,
 In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
 At Popering, in the place;
 His fader was a man ful free,
 And lord he was of that contree,
 As it was Goddes grace

Sir Thopas wex¹ a doghty swayn,
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn,²
 His lippes rede as rose;
 His rode³ is lyk scarlet in grayn,⁴
 And I yow telle in good certayn,
 He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,
 That to his girdle raughte⁵ adoun;
 His shoon of Cordewane.⁶
 Of Brugges⁷ were his hosen broun,
 His robe was of ciclatoun,⁸
 That coste many a jane.⁹

He coude¹⁰ hunte at wilde deer,
 And ryde an hauking for riveer,¹¹
 With grey goshawk on honde;
 Ther-to he was a good acheer,
 Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
 Ther any ram shal stonde.¹²

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
 They moorne for him, paramour,
 Whan hem were bet¹³ to slepe;
 But he was chast and no lechour,
 And sweet as is the bremble-flour
 That bereth the rede hepe.¹⁴

And so bifel up-on a day,
 For sothe, as I yow telle may,
 Sir Thopas wolde out ryde;

¹ waxed, grew.² finest bread.³ complexion.⁴ well-dyed.⁵ reached.⁶ Spanish leather.⁷ From Bruges.⁸ scarlet or any rich fabric.⁹ Genoese coin.¹⁰ knew how.¹¹ Simply "hawking." ¹² "To go to the river" is to go hawking; "to go to the wood" is to go hunting.¹³ A ram was the usual prize.¹⁴ better.¹⁵ hips.

He worth upon¹⁵ his stede gray,
 And in his honde a launcegay,¹⁶
 A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
 Ther-inne is many a wilde best,
 Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
 And, as he priketh north and est,
 I telle it yow, him hadde almost
 Bitid a sory care.

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
 The lycorys and cetewale,¹⁷
 And many a clowe-gilofre;¹⁸
 And notemuge to putte in ale,
 Whether it be moyste¹⁹ or stale,
 Or for to leye in cofre.

The briddes singe, it is no nay,²⁰
 The sparhawk and the papejay,
 That joye it was to here;
 The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
 The wodedowve upon the spray
 She sang ful loude and clere.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
 Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
 And priked²¹ as he were wood.²²
 His faire stede in his prikinge
 So swatte²³ that men mighte him wringe;
 His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so very was
 For prikinge on the softe gras,
 So fiers was his corage,
 That doun he leyde him in that plas
 To make his stede som solas,
 And yaf him good forage.

'O seinte Marie, benedicite!
 What eyleth this love at me²⁴
 To binde me so sore?
 Me dremed al this night, pardee,
 An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
 And slepe under my gore.²⁵

An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,
 For in this world no womman is
 Worthy to be my make²⁶
 In toune;

¹⁵ mounted.¹⁶ hunting-spear.¹⁷ the herb zedoary.¹⁸ clove.¹⁹ musty, new.²⁰ there's no denying it.²¹ spurred.²² mad.²³ sweated.²⁴ What has this love against me?²⁵ cloak.²⁶ mate.

Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eek by dounel¹

In-to his sadel he clamb anon,
And priketh over style and stoon
An elf-queen for t'espye,
Til he so longe had riden and goon
That he foud, in a privee woon,¹
The contree of Fairye

So wilke;
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,
Neither wyf ne childe.

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede.
He seyde, 'Child, by Termagaunt,
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee thy stede

With mace.
Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye²
Dwelling in this place.'

The child seyde, 'Al-so mote I thee,³
Tomorwe wol I mete thee
Whan I have myn armour;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure;⁴

Thy mawe
Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day,
For heer thou shalt be slawe.'

Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;
This geaunt at him stones caste
Out of a fel staf-slinge;
But faire escapeth child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,
And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier thane the nightingale,
For now I wol yow rounne⁵
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,⁶
Prikng over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to tounne.

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game and glee,
For nedes moste he fichte.

¹ retreat. ² a stringed instrument. ³ prosper.
⁴ sourly, i.e. dearly, pay for it. ⁵ tell. ⁶ slim waist.

With a geaunt with hevedes⁷ three,
For paramour and jolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales,
And gestours, for to tellen tales
Anon in myn arminge;
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-lykinge.'

They fette⁸ him first the swete wyn,¹⁴⁰
And mede eek in a maselyn,⁹
And royal spicerye
Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,¹⁰
With sugre that is so trye.¹¹

He dide next his whyte lere¹²
Of clooth of lake¹³ fyn and clere
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,¹⁴
And over that an habergeoun¹⁵¹⁵⁰
For¹⁶ percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk,¹⁷
Was al y-wrought of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.¹⁸

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-in was a bores heed,
A charbocle bisyde;¹⁶⁰
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!

His jambeux¹⁹ were of quirboilly,²⁰
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton²¹ bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon,²²
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light.

His spere was of fyn ciprees,¹⁷⁰
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;

⁷ heads. ⁸ fetched. ⁹ mazer, or maple-bowl.
¹⁰ cummin. ¹¹ delicious. ¹² flesh. ¹³ linen.
¹⁴ padded doublet. ¹⁵ coat-of-mail.
¹⁶ against, to prevent.
¹⁷ Hauberk is usually coat-of-mail, but here it is, apparently, plate-armour. Thopas was well protected.
¹⁸ fight. ¹⁹ shin-pieces.
²⁰ hard leather, boiled and moulded.
²¹ a composite metal. ²² probably ivory.

His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way
Ful softly and rounde

In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!

If ye wol any more of it,

To telle it wol I fonde.

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,

Bothe knight and lady free,

And herkneth to my spelle;

Of bataille and of chivalry,

And of ladyes love-drury¹

Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,

Of Horn child and of Ypotys,

Of Bevis and sir Gy,

Of sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;

But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour

Of royal chivalry.

His gode stede al he bistrood,

And forth upon his wey he glood²

As sparkle out of the bronde;

Up-on his crest he bar a tour,

And ther-in stiked a lily-flour.

God shilde his cors fro shonde!³

And for he was a knight auntrous,⁴

He nolde slepen in non hous,

But ligen in his hode;

His brighte helm was his wonger,⁵

And by him baiteth his dextrer⁶

Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-self drank water of the wel,

As did the knight sir Percivel,

So worthy under wede,

Til on a day—

Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.

THE NONNE PREESTES TALE

Here biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote

A POVRE widwe, somdel stope⁷ in age,

Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,

Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.

This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,

¹ passion. ² glided. ³ harm. ⁴ adventurous,
errant. ⁵ pillow. ⁶ war-horse. ⁷ advanced.

Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel⁸ and hir rente;
By housbondrye⁹ of such as God hir sente
She fond¹⁰ hir-self, and eek hir doghtren
two.

Three large sowes hadde she, and namo. ¹⁰
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte
Malie.

Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a splendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir
throthe;

Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.

Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;

Attempre¹¹ dyete was al her phisyk,

And exerceyse, and hertes suffisaunce.

The goute lette hir no-thing¹² for to daunce,

N'apoplexye shente¹³ nat hir heed; ²¹

No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;

Hir bord was served most with whyt and
blak,

Milk and broun breed, in which she fond
no lak,

Seynd¹⁴ bacoun, and somtyme an ey or
tweye,

For she was as it were a maner deye.¹⁵

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute

With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,

In which she hadde a cok, hight Chaunte-
cleer.

In al the land of crowing nas his peer; ³⁰

His vois was merier than the mery orgon¹⁶

On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;

Wel sikerer¹⁷ was his crowing in his logge,

Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.

By nature knew he ech ascencioun

Of equinoxial in thilke toun;

For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,

Thanne crew he that it mighte nat ben
amended.

His comb was redder than the fyn coral,

And baitaied as it were a castel-wal. ⁴⁰

His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;

Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;

His nayles whytter than the lillie flour,

And lyk the burned gold was his colour.

This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce

Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,

Whiche were his sutores and his paramours,

And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.

⁸ chattels. ⁹ economy. ¹⁰ provided for.

¹¹ Temperate. ¹² hindered her not at all. ¹³ hurt.

¹⁴ Singed. ¹⁵ farming or dairy woman. ¹⁶ organ

pipes (plural). ¹⁷ more accurate.

Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote. ⁵⁰
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she bath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith; ¹
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, 'My lief is faren in londe.'
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde, ⁶⁰
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.

And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan Gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched ²
sore.

And whan that Pertelote thus herde him
rore,

She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this man-
ere? ⁷⁰

Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!' ⁷⁰
And he answerde and seyde thus, 'Madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By God, me mette ³ I was in swich mes-
chief

Right now, that yet myn herte is sore
afright.

Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene receche ⁴
aright.

And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and down
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a
beste,

Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad
areste ⁸⁰

Upon my body, and wolde han had me
deed.

His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his
heres;

His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen
tweye.

Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees.'

'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, herte-
lees!

¹ limb.

² troubled.

³ Impersonal verb — "I dreamed."

⁴ interpret my dream.

Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that God above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my
love; ⁹⁰

I can not love a coward, by my feith.
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool, ⁵
Ne noon avauntour, ⁶ by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your
love,

That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a
berd? ¹⁰⁰

Allas! and conne ye been agast of swe-
venis?

No-thing, God wot, but vanitee, in sweven
is.

Swevenes engendren of replecciouns, ⁷
And ofte of fume, ⁸ and of complecciouns ⁹
Whan humours been to habundant in a
wight.

Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-
night,

Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede colera, ¹⁰ pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here
dremes

Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes; ¹¹ ¹¹⁰
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of kontek, ¹² and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That worken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.

Lo Catoun, ¹³ which that was so wys a
man, ¹²⁰

Seyde he nat thus, "Ne do no fors ¹⁴ of
dremes"?

Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the
bemes,

For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye

⁵ weapon. ⁶ boaster. ⁷ repletions.

⁸ the vapors from a disordered stomach.

⁹ dispositions, mixtures of humors.

¹⁰ red bile. Choler was one of the four "humours,"
the others being blood, black bile, and phlegm.

¹¹ flames.

¹² strife.

¹³ The mediæval Dionysius Cato.

¹⁴ Pay no attention.

Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your
prow;¹ 130

And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for Goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours
hote;

And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 140
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol,² centaure,³ and fumetere,⁴
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce,⁵ or of gaytres⁶ beryis,
Of erbe yve,⁷ growing in our yerd, that
mery is;

Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete
hem in.

Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow namore.
'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy⁸ of
your lore. 150

But natheles, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
That al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns 160
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.

Oon of the gretteste auctours⁹ that men
rede

Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit¹⁰ of herbergage
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be. 171
Wherfor they mosten, of necessitee,

As for that night, departen compaignye;
And eek of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune. 180

And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;¹¹
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep; 190
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, "I am
now slawe;

Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,
"A carte ful of dong ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldly. 200
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"
And tolde him every poynt how he was
slayn,

With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful
trewe;

For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.

The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, "Sire, your felawe is agon; 210
As sone as day he wente out of the toun."
This man gan fallen in suspeccioun,
Remembering on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he
lette,¹²

Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeance and justice of this felonye:— 220
"My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.

¹ profit. ² laurel. ³ centaury. ⁴ fumitory.
⁵ lesser spurge. ⁶ dogwood, or possibly buckthorn.
⁷ ground-pine. ⁸ many thanks. ⁹ Perhaps
Cicero in *De Divinatione*, I, 27. ¹⁰ limited.

¹¹ started.

¹² delay.

I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
 "That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!"
 What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
 The peple out-sterre, and caste the cart to
 grounde,

And in the middel of the dong they founde
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.

O blisful God, that art so just and
 trewe!

Lo, how that thou biwreyst mordre alway!
 Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
 Mordre is so wlatson¹ and abhominable
 To God, that is so just and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled² be;
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.

And right anon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,³
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,⁴
 That thay biknewe⁵ hir wikkednesse anon,
 And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.

Here may men seen that dremes been to
 drede.

And certes in the same book I rede,
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
 (I gabbe⁶ nat, so have I joye or blis.)
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,
 For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrairie,
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie,⁷
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
 But on a day, ageyn the even-tyde,
 The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as
 hem leste.

Jolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
 And casten hem⁸ ful erly for to saille;
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
 Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes
 syde,

And him comaunded that he sholde
 abyde,

And seyde him thus, "If thou to-morwe
 wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt;⁹ my tale is at an
 ende."

He wook, and tolde his felawe what he
 mette,

And preysde him his viage for to lette;⁹
 As for that day, he preysde him to abyde.
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,

Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
 "No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte
 agaste,

That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
 For swevenes been but vanitees and japes.
 Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
 And eek of many a mase¹⁰ therewithal;
 Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
 And thus for-sleuthen¹¹ wilfully thy tyde,
 God wat it reweth me;¹² and have good
 day."

And thus he took his leve, and wente his
 way.

But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-
 seyled,

Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it
 eyled,

But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
 And ship and man under the water wente
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
 And therefor, faire Pertelote so dere,
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
 That no man sholde been to recchelees
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to
 drede.

Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
 That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
 Of Mercenrike,¹³ how Kenelm mette a
 thing;

A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
 His mordre in his avisioun he say.
 His norice him expounded every del
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him
 wel

For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
 And therefore litel tale hath he told
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
 By God, I hadde lever than my sherte
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
 Macrobeus, that writ th'avisioun
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou,¹⁴
 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
 Warning of thinges that men after seen.

And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
 In the olde testament, of Daniel,
 If he held dremes any vanitee.
 Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see

¹⁰ astounding thing. ¹¹ idle away. ¹² I lament.

¹³ Mercia, in central England.

¹⁴ Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*.

¹ diagnosing. ² concealed. ³ tortured. ⁴ racked.
⁵ confessed. ⁶ lie. ⁷ planned. ⁸ drowned. ⁹ delay.

Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
 Loke of Egipt the king, daun¹ Pharao,
 His bakere and his boteler also,
 Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
 Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes²
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.

Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
 Which signified he sholde anhangen be? 320
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
 She dremed on the same night biforn,
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille;
 She warnen him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anon of Achilles.
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle. 330
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,³
 For they ben venimous, I woot it wel;
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte
 al this.

Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing God hath sent me large grace;
 For whan I see the beautee of your face, 340
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yenn,
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
 For, also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio.

Madame, the sentence of this Latin is —
 Womman is mannes joye and al his blis.
 For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
 Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
 For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
 I am so ful of joye and of solas 350
 That I defye bothe swenen and dreem.
 And with that word he fley down fro the
 beem,

For it was day, and eek his hennas alle;
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
 He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
 And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
 He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
 And on his toos he rometh up and down, 360
 Him deynd not to sette his foot to grounde.
 He chuketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,

¹ lord, dominus. ² realms. ³ set no store by.

And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
 And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the month in which the world
 bigan,

That highte March, whan God first makend
 man,⁴

Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
 Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two, 370
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eye to the brighte sonne,
 That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat
 more;

And knew by kynde,⁵ and by noon other
 lore,

That it was pryme,⁶ and crew with blisful
 stevene.

'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on
 hevene

Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.

Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, 380
 Herkneþ this blisful briddes how they
 singe,

And see the fresshe floures how they
 springe;

Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.⁷

But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;

For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.

God woot that worldly joye is sone ago;

And if a rethor⁷ coude faire endyte,

He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,

As for a sovereyn notabilitee.

Now every wys man, lat him herkne me; 390

This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,

As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,⁸

That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.

Now will I torne agayn to my sentence.

A col-fox,⁹ ful of sly inquitee,

That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,

By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,

The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast¹⁰

Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire

Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;

And in a bed of wortes¹¹ stille he lay, 401

Til it was passed undern¹² of the day,

Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,

As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,

⁴ So they called March the first month of the year.

⁵ nature. ⁶ nine A.M. ⁷ a master of eloquence.

⁸ A long-winded prose romance, of which Malory

made much use.

⁹ black or black-tipped fox.

¹⁰ burst.

¹¹ vegetables.

¹² middle of the morning.

That in awayt ligger to mordre men.
 O false morderer, lurking in thy den!
 O newe Scariot,¹ newe Genilon!²
 False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
 That broghtest Troye al outrelly³ to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,⁴¹⁰
 That thou into that yerd flough fro the
 bemes!

Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
 That thilke day was perilous to thee.
 But what that God forwoot mot nedes be,
 After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.
 Witesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
 That in scole is gret altercacioun
 In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand
 men.

But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,⁴ 420
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
 Or Boëce,⁵ or the bishop Bradwardyn,⁶
 Whether that Goddes worthy forwiting
 Streyneth⁷ me nedely for to doon a thing,
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);
 Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,
 Though God forwoot it, er that it was
 wrought;

Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
 But by necessitee condicionel. 430
 I wol not han to do of swich matere;
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
 That took his counsel of his wyf, with
 sorwe,

To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met the dreem, that I yow
 tolde.

Wommennes counsels been ful ofte colde;⁸
 Wommannes conseil broghte us first to wo,
 And made Adam fro paradys to go,
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese. —
 But for I noot to whom it mighte displese
 If I counsel of wommen wolde blame, 441
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich
 matere,

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may
 here.

Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat
 myne;

I can noon harm of no womman divyne. —
 Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir susteres by,

¹ Judas Iscariot. ² Roland's betrayer. ³ entirely.

⁴ sift it thoroughly.

⁵ Boethius.

⁶ English theologian, d. 1349.

⁷ constraineth. ⁸ disastrous, — a proverb.

Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the
 see; 450

For Physiologus⁹ seith sikerly,
 How that they singen wel and merily.
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yē,
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
 No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte.
 For naturally a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 460
 Though he never erst had seyn it with
 his yē.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him
 espye,

He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde, 'Gentil sire, alas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for t'espye;
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe.
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene 471
 As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinege
 Than hadde Boëce, or any that can singe.
 My lord your fader (God his soule blesse!)
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
 Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
 So mote I brouke¹⁰ wel myn eyen tweye, 480
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
 As dide your fader in the morweninge;
 Certe, it was of herte, al that he song.
 And for to make his voys the more strong,
 He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his
 yēn

He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon there-with-al,
 And stretche forth his nekke long and smal.
 And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
 That ther nas no man in no regioun 490
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
 I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,¹¹
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok

⁹ The mediæval "Bestiary," a collection of moralized descriptions of beasts.

¹⁰ Our "brook" vb., here "use" or "enjoy."

¹¹ Nigellus Wireker's "Burnellus" or "Speculum Stultorum" (Mirror of Fools), Anglo-Latin satirical poem written about 1190.

Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,¹
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee, ⁵⁰⁰
 Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete? ²
 This Chauntecleer his wings can to bete,
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
 So was he ravished with his flaterye.

Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
 Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,³
 That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
 Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
 Redeth Ecclesiaste ⁴ of flaterye;
 Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. ⁵¹⁰

This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his
 toos,
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen
 cloos,

And gan to crowe loude for the nones;⁵
 And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
 And by the gargat⁶ hente Chauntecleer,
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
 For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.⁷
 O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes! ⁵²⁰
 And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,
 More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to
 dye?

O Gaufred,⁸ dere mayster soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy king Richard was
 slayn

With shot,⁹ compleynedest his deth so sore,
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy
 lore, ⁵³⁰

The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude
 pleyne

For Chauntecleres drede, and for his payne.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
 Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun

¹ foolish.

² imitate.

³ flatterer.

⁴ Perhaps *Ecclesiasticus* xii, 10 f. in the *Apocrypha*.

⁵ "For the nonce," a meaningless phrase.

⁶ gorge, throat.

⁷ pursued.

⁸ Geoffrey de Vinsauf (fl. 1200) who wrote the *Nova Poetria* to show what good verse should be. It contains an overdone lament for Richard I.

⁹ He was deeply wounded near the nape of the neck by an arrow.

Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite
 swerd,

Whan he hadde hent ¹⁰ king Priam by the
 berd,

And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),¹¹
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos, ⁵⁴⁰
 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the
 sighte.

But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighite,
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales¹² wyf,
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
 And that the Romayns hadde brend Car-
 tage;

She was so ful of torment and of rage,
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee ⁵⁵⁰
 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
 For that hir housbondes losten alle hir
 lyves;

Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.

This sely ¹³ widwe, and eek hir doghtres
 two,

Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
 And out at dores sterten they anoon,
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;
 And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weyla-
 way! ⁵⁶⁰

Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
 And eek with staves many another man;
 Rau Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Ger-
 land,

And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray
 hogges,

So were they fered for berking of the
 dogges

And shouting of the men and wimmen eke;
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte
 breke.

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem
 quelle; ⁵⁷⁰

The gees for fere flownen over the trees;
 Out of the hye cam the swarm of bees;

So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite*!
 Certes, he Jakke Straw,¹⁵ and his meynnee,

¹⁰ seized.

¹¹ *Aeneid*, II, 544.

¹² King of Carthage, who slew himself when the Romans captured it in 146 B. C.

¹³ helpless.

¹⁴ kill.

¹⁵ Leader of the London insurrection of 1381. He slew many Flemings.

Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemes,¹ and of box,
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and

pouped,
 And therewithal thay shryked and they
 houped; 580

It semed as that heven sholde falle.
 Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!

Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
 In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
 And seyde, 'Sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn (as wis² God helpe me),
 "Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!

A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 590
 Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
 Maugree³ your heed, the cok shal heer
 abyde;

I wol him ete in feith, and that anon." —
 The fox answerde, 'In feith, it shall be
 don,' —

And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,⁴
 And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
 And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
 'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
 I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespas,
 In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd, 601
 Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the
 yerd;

But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
 Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
 I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so,
 'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe⁵ us bothe
 two,

And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood
 and bones,

If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
 Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yē. 610
 For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
 Al wilfully, God lat him never thee!'⁶
 'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yeve him
 meschaunce,

That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
 That jangleth whan he sholde holde his
 pees.'

Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
 And negligent, and truste on flaterye.
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,

¹ trumpets.
⁴ deftly.

² surely.
⁵ curse.

³ In spite of.
⁶ flourish.

As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Taketh the moralitee, good men. 620
 For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
 To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.⁷
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.
 Now, gode God, if that it be thy wille,
 As seith my lord, so make us alle good men;
 And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE

Here folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale
Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum,
sexto.

'LORDINGS,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I
 preche,

I payne me to han an hauteyn speche,⁸
 And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
 For I can al by rote⁹ that I telle.
 My theme is alwey oon, and ever was —
 "Radix malorum est Cupiditas."¹⁰

First I pronounce whennes that I come,
 And than my bulles shewe I, alle and
 somme.

Our lige lordes seel on my patente,¹¹
 That shewe I first, my body to warente, 10
 That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
 Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
 And after that than telle I forth my tales,
 Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
 Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
 And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
 To saffron with my predicacioun,¹²
 And for to stire men to devocioun.
 Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
 Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones; 20
 Reliks been they, as wenen they echoun.
 Than have I in latoun¹³ a sholder-boon
 Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.¹⁴
 "Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes
 kepe; 15

If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or ox swelle
 That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge,¹⁶
 Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,

⁷ 2 Timothy, iii, 16.

⁸ I take pains to preach in a lofty vein.

⁹ know by heart.

¹⁰ 1 Timothy, vi, 10.

¹¹ warrant, privilege.

¹² To colour, make more impressive, my preaching.
 Saffron was a beloved spice and garnish.

¹³ latten, a mixed metal resembling brass.

¹⁴ Jacob's?

¹⁵ heed.

¹⁶ If it has eaten a snake, or if a snake has stung it.

And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore 30
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I
telle.

If that the good-man, that the bestes
oweth,¹

Wol every wike,² er that the cok him
croweth,

Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.

And, sirs, also it heleth jalousye;
For, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage, 40
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defeaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or three.

Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sownen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.

Good men and wommen, o thing warne
I yow,

If any wight be in this chirche now, 50
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
To offren to my reliks in this place.

And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offren in Goddes name,
And I assoille him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to 60
me."

By this gaude³ have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
I preche, so as ye han herd bfore,
And telle an hundred false japes more.
Than payne I me to strecche forth the
nekke,

And est and west upon the peple I bekke,⁴
As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,⁵ 70
That it is joye to see my businesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely⁶ un-to me.

For my entente is nat but for to winne,
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
Though that her soules goon a-blake-
beried!⁷

For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun; 80
Som for plessaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ipocrisie,
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge
smerte

In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
For, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same 90
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeances;
Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was —
"*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*"

Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
Which that I use, and that is avaryce. 100
But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne,
Yet can I maken othere folk to twinne⁸
From avaryce, and sore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente.
I preche no-thing but for coveityse;
Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.

Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swich thinges can they wel reporte and
holde. 110

What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
And winne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol live in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoughte it never trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry
londes;

I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,
Al⁹ were it yeven of the povrest page, 121
Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,

⁷ a-blackberrying. ⁸ separate. ⁹ Although.

¹ "Own" and "owe" are the same word.

² apparently "week."

³ trifle. ⁴ nod. ⁵ actively. ⁶ especially.

And have a joly wenche in every toun.
 But herketh, lordings, in conclusioun;
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
 Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
 By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
 That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking.
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,¹³
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
 Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
 Now holde your pees, my tale I wol be-
 ginne.'

THE PARDONERS TALE

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale

IN Flaundres whylom was a companye
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden¹ folye,
 As ryot, hasard, stewes,² and tavernes,³
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,⁴
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day
 and night,

And ete also and drinken over hir might,
 Thurgh which they doon the devel sacri-
 fyse

With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
 By superfluitee abhominable;
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere;¹¹
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;⁴
 Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght
 y-nough;

And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.⁵
 And right anon than comen tombesteres⁶
 Fetyrs⁷ and smale, and yonge fruyteteres,⁸
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,⁹
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
 That is annexed un-to glotonye;²⁰

The holy writ take I to my witness,
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.

Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely,¹⁰
 Lay by his doghtres two, unwittingly;
 So dronke he was he niste what he wroghte.

Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte),
 Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
 Right at his owene table he yaf his heste¹¹
 To sleen the Baptist John ful giltelees.

Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;³⁰

¹ followed. ² brothels. ³ citherns, mandolins.

⁴ The church taught that Christ was pained again in
 whatever part of his body a profane person swore by.

⁵ laughed. ⁶ tumbling girls.

⁷ well formed. ⁸ girls who sold fruit.

⁹ venders of wafers, i.e. waffles.

¹⁰ against nature. ¹¹ gave the order.

He seith, he can no difference finde
 Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
 And a man which that is dronkelewe,¹²
 But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,¹³
 Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
 O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
 O cause first of our confusioun,
 O original of our dampnacioun,
 Til Crist had boght us with his blood
 agayn!

Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,⁴⁰
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!

Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
 Fro Paradyd to labour and to wo
 Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;¹⁴
 For why! that Adam fasted, as I rede,
 He was in Paradyd; and whan that he
 Eet of the fruyt defended¹⁵ on the tree,
 Anon¹⁶ he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!⁵⁰
 O, wiste a man how many maladyes
 Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
 He wolde been the more mesurable
 Of his diete, sittinge at his table.

Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
 Maketh that, Est and West, and North and
 South,

In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke¹⁷
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and
 drinke!

Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
 'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to
 mete,⁶⁰

Shal God destroyen bothe,' as Paulus seith.¹⁸
 Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
 Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and
 rede,¹⁹

That of his throte he maketh his privee,
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.

The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
 'Ther walken many of whiche yow told
 have I,

I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,⁷⁰
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her
 god.'²⁰

O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,²¹

Fulfilde of donge and of corrupcioun!

At either ende of thee foul is the soun.

¹² drunken. The termination is Scandinavian.

¹³ madness, happening to a person of evil nature.

¹⁴ beyond doubt. ¹⁵ forbidden. ¹⁶ instantly.

¹⁷ labour overmuch. ¹⁸ 1 Corinthians, vi, 13.

¹⁹ wines. ²⁰ Philippians, iii, 19. ²¹ bag.

How greet labour and cost is thee to finde!¹
Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne,
and grinde,

And turnen substaunce in-to accident,²
To fulfille al thy likerous talent³!
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary,⁴ for they caste noght a-wey⁵ 80
That may go thurgh the golet softe and
swote;

Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
To make him yet a newer appetyt.
But certes, he that haunteth swich delices
Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.

A lecherous thing is wyn; and dronkenesse

Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face, 89
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay, 'Sampsoun,
Sampsoun';

And yet, God wot, Sampsoun drank never
no wyn.

Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;⁶
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the
rede, 100

And narely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,⁷
That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.⁸
This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
In othere wynes, growing faste by,⁹
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,⁹
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes
three,

And weneth that he be at boom in Chepe,
He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;¹⁰
And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun, Samp-
soun.' 110

But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow
preye,

That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,

Of victories in th'olde testament,
Thurgh verray God, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere.

Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishon-
our,

Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse. 120
And over all this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded un-to Lamuel —¹¹
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I —
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
Of wyn-yeving to hem that han justyse.
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.

And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
Now wol I yow defenden¹² hasardrye.
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges, 129
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
BlaspHEME of Crist, manslaughter, and
wast also

Of catel¹³ and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreve¹⁴ and contrarie of honour,
For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyër he is of estaat,
The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye
He is, as by commune opinioun,
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun. 140

Stilbon,¹⁵ that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And whan he cam, him happede, par
chaunce,

That alle the grettest that were of that
lond,

Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him boon agayn to his contree,
And seyde, 'Ther wol I nat lese my
name;

Ne I wol nat tak on me so greet de-
fame, 150

Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours.
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wil, ne as by my trettee.'
This wyse philosophe thus seyde he.

¹¹ Lemuel, v. *Proverbs*, xxxi, 4.

¹² forbid. ¹³ chattels, property.

¹⁴ reproach.

¹⁵ Apparently for Chilon. The story is in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, book I, chap. 5.

¹ to provide for.

² A scholastic distinction: the cooks change the very nature of the food. ³ gourmandizing appetite.

⁴ marrow.

⁵ decent personal care.

⁶ Near Cadiz; the wine is perhaps natural sherry.

⁷ Cheapside, London.

⁸ A sly allusion to the adulterating and fortifying of wines.

⁹ drunken fumes.

¹⁰ The wines of La Rochelle and Bordeaux were milder.

Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith
us,¹ 160
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may finden other maner pley
Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away.

Now wol I speke of othes false and
grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprev-
able. 170

The heighe God forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew;² but in special
Of swering seith the holy Jeremye,³
'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat
lye,

And swere in dome, and eek in rightwis-
nesse;'

But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
Bihold and see, that in the firste table⁴
Of heighe Goddes hestes honourable,
How that the seconde heste of him is this—
'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.' 180
Lo, rather⁵ he forbedeth swich swering
Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
This known, that his hestes understand-
eth,

How that the second heste of God is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,⁶
That vengeance shal nat parten from his
hous,

That of his othes is to outrageous.
'By Goddes precious herte, and by his
nayles,

And by the blode of Crist, that it is in
Hayles,⁷ 190
Seven is my chance, and thyn is cink and
treye;⁸

By Goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,

¹ John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus*, after the place last cited.

² *Matthew*, v. 34. ³ *Jeremiah*, iv, 2.

⁴ The commandments were divided into two tables, the first laying down man's duty toward God, the second his duty toward his fellows. The first two commandments were grouped as one, and so our third was the second—as in l. 179.

⁵ He forbids it sooner, i.e. earlier among the commandments.

⁶ And furthermore I say flatly.

⁷ At Ashridge in Gloucestershire. This precious blood in a phial was visible only to the truly penitent.

⁸ five and three. These are technical expressions in the game of "hazard."

This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte
go,'—

This fruyt cometh of the bicched⁹ bones
two,

Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.
Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale.
But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.

THISE rytoutours three, of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle, 200
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
'Go bet,'¹⁰ quod he, 'and axe redily,
What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
And look that thou reporte his name wel.'
'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-
a-del.

It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres; 210
And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
For-dronke,¹¹ as he saton his bench upright;
Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth
Deeth,

That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte
a-two,

And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie: 220
Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.'
'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverne,
'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn
this yeer,

Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
Both man and womman, child and hyne,
and page.

I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'
'Ye, Goddes armes!' quod this rytoutour, 230
'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to Goddes digne bones!
Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;
Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,

⁹ An uncertain word meaning picked, endented; or accured; or knuckle (bones).

¹⁰ quickly, literally "better." ¹¹ Dead drunk.

And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
By Goddes dignitee, er it be night.¹

Togidres han thise three her trouthes
plight,²⁴⁰

To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
As though he were his owene y-boren
brother.

And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,
And forth they goon towards that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
And many a grisly ooth than han they
sworn,

And Cristes blessed body they to-rente —
Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him
hente.

Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a
style,²⁵⁰

An old man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,¹
And seyde thus, 'Now, lordes, God yow
seel!'²

The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, 'What? carl, with sory
grace,³

Why artow al forwrapped⁴ save thy face?
Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'

This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And seyde thus, 'For I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in-to Iude,²⁶⁰
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn
age;

And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe time as it is Goddes wille.

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a resteles caityf,
And on the ground, which is my modres
gate,

I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, "Leve moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and
skin!"²⁷⁰

Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my
cheste,

That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!"⁵
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked⁶ is my face.

¹ greeted.² save.³ confound you.⁴ concealed with wrappings.⁵ I would change all the treasure that is in the chest
at the foot of my bed for a haircloth (shroud).⁶ withered.

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,²⁸⁰
"Agayns⁷ an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse;"⁸ wherfor I yeve yow
reed,

Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
And God be with yow, wher ye go⁹ or ryde.
I moot go thider as I have to go.'

'Nay, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat
so,'

Seyde this other hasardour anon;
'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour
Deeth,²⁹¹

That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his
aspye,¹⁰

Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,¹¹
By God, and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'

'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be so
leef

To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
Under a tree and ther he wol abyde;³⁰¹
Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing
hyde.

See ye that ook? Right ther ye shul him
finde,

God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
And yow amende!' — thus seyde this olde
man.

And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they
founde

Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florins been so faire and
bryghte,³¹²

That doun they sette hem by this precious
hord.

The worste of hem he spake the firste word.
'Brethren,' quod he, 'tak kepe what I
seye;

My wit is greet, though that I bourde¹² and
pleye.

⁷ When you meet.⁸ walk. ¹⁰ spy.⁹ Leviticus, xix, 32.¹¹ pay for.¹² joke.

This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven;
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
Ey! Goddes precious dignitee! who wende
To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But mighte this gold be caried fro this
place ³²²

Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youre —
For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures —
Than were we in heigh felicitee.
But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves
stronge,

And for our owene tresor doon us honge.¹
This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly as it mighte. ³³⁰
Wherefore I rede that cut² among us alle
Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol
falle;

And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
Shal renne to the toun, and that ful
swythe,³

And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.
That oon of hem the cut broughte in his
fest, ³⁴⁰

And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol
falle;

And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And also sone as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
'Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne
brother,

Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us three.
But natheles, if I can shape it so ³⁵¹
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?'
That other answerde, 'I noot how that
may be;

He woot how that the gold is with us
tweye;

What shal we doon, what shal we to him
seye?'

'Shal it be conseil?'⁴ seyde the firste
shrewe,⁵

¹ cause us to be hanged.

² lot; the "cut" was the stick or straw cut longer
(or shorter) than all the others.

³ quickly.

⁴ a secret.

⁵ rascal.

'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel
aboute.'

'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of
doute, ³⁶⁰
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat bi-
wrewe.'

'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel
we be tweye,

And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him
pleye;

And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes
tweye

Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in
game,

And with thy dagger look thou do the
same;

And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee; ³⁷⁰
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees righte at our owene
wille.'

And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me
seye.

This yongest, which that wente un-to the
toun,

Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise florins newe and
brite.

'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I
mighte

Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
Of God, that sholde live so mery as I!' ³⁸¹

And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson
beye,

With which he mighte sleen his felawes
tweye;

For-why the feend fond him in swich
lyvinge,

That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie, ³⁹⁰
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes
quelle;⁶

And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,⁷
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,

⁶ kill.

⁷ yard, hen-yard, literally "hedge."

And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.

The pothecarie answerde, ' And thou shalt
have

A thing that, al-so God my soule save,
In al this world ther nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
Noght but the mountance¹ of a corn of
whete, 401

That he ne shal his lyf anon forelete;
Ye, sterve² he shal, and that in lasse whyle
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a
myle;

This poyson is so strong and violent.'

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
And borwed of him large botels three;
And in the two his poyson poured he; 410
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
For al the night he shoop him³ for to swinke⁴
In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he.

What nedeth it to sermone of it more?

For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak
that oon, 420

' Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us
merie,

And afterward we wol his body berie.'
And with that word it happed him, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven⁵ bothe two.

But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,⁶
Mo wonder⁷ signes of empoisoning
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir end-
ing. 430

Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde,

That to thy creatour which that thee
wroghte,

And with his precious herte-blood thee
boghte, 440

Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!

Now, goode men, God forgeve yow your
trespas,

And were yow fro the sinne of avaryce.

Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,⁸

So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,⁹

Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.

Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!

Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolles!

Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;

In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon; 450

I yow assoille, by myn heigh power,

Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as
cleer

As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche.

And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,

So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;

For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.

But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,

I have relikes and pardon in my male,

As faire as any man in Engelond,

Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.

If any of yow wol, of devocioun, 461

Offren, and han myn absolucoun,

Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,

And mekely receyvethe my pardoun:

Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,

Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,

So that ye offren alwey newe and newe

Nobles and pens, which that be gode and
trewe.

It is an honour to everich that is heer,

That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer

T'assoille yow, in contree as ye ryde, 471

For aventures which that may bityde.

Peraventure ther may falle oon or two

Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke
atwo.

Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle

That I am in your felaweship y-falle,

That may assoille yow, bothe more and
lasse,

Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.

I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,

For he is most enveloped in sinne. 480

Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,

And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,

Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.

' Nay, nay,' quod he, ' than have I Cristes
curs!

¹ amount. ² die. ³ intended. ⁴ labour. ⁵ died.

⁶ Avicenna (fl. 1000 A.D.), the great Arabian physician, wrote a medical treatise called the "Canon," with chapters termed "fens."

⁷ wondrous.

⁸ save.

⁹ silver coins.

Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so thee'ch!¹
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old
 breech,²
 And swere it were a relik of a seint.'³

Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.

THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE

Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe

IN th'olde dayes of the king Arthour,
 Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
 Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
 The elf-queen, with hir joly companye,
 Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
 This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
 But now can no man see none elves mo.
 For now the grete charitee and prayeres
 Of limitours and othere holy freres,¹⁰
 That serchen every lond and every stream,
 As thikke as motes in the soune-beem,
 Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes,
 boures,
 Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
 Thropes,⁴ bernes, shipnes,⁵ dayeryes,
 This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
 Ther walketh now the limitour himself
 In undermeles⁶ and in morweninges,¹⁹
 And seyth his matins and his holy thinges
 As he goth in his limitacioun.
 Women may go saufly up and down,
 In every bush, or under every tree;
 Ther is noon other incubus but he,
 And he ne wol doon hem nou⁷ dishonour.

And so bifel it, that this king Arthour
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelere,
 That on a day cam rydinge fro river;⁸
 And happed that, allone as she was born,
 He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn,³⁰
 Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,⁹
 By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed;
 For which oppressioun was swich clamour
 And swich pursute un-to the king Arthour,

That dampned was this knight for to be
 deed
 By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his
 heed

Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;
 But that the quene and othere ladies mo
 So longe preyeden the king of grace,
 Til he his lyf him graunted in the place,⁴⁰
 And yaf him to the quene al at hir wille,
 To chese, whether she wolde him save or
 spille.¹⁰

The quene thanketh the king with al hir
 might,
 And after this thus spak she to the knight,
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a
 day:

'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich
 array

That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
 I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me
 What thing is it that wommen most de-
 syren.

Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from
 yren.⁵⁰

And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,
 Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and
 lere

An answer suffisant in this matere.
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
 Thy body for to yelden in this place.

Wo was this knight and sorwefully he
 syketh;

But what! he may nat do al as him lyketh.
 And at the laste, he chees him for to
 wende,⁵⁹

And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
 With swich answer as God wolde him pur-
 veye;

And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth
 his weye.

He seketh every hous and every place,
 Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace,
 To lerne what thing wommen loven most;
 But he ne coude arryven in no cost,
 Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere
 Two creatures accordinge in-fere.¹¹

Somme seyde, wommen loven best rich-
 esse,

Somme seyde honour, somme seyde joly-
 nesse;⁷⁰

Somme riche array, somme seyden lust
 abedde,

And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.

¹⁰ destroy.

¹¹ agreeing together.

¹ as I may prosper.

² breeches.

³ Here follows for a few lines a coarse quarrel be-
 tween the two, but the knight reconciles them.

⁴ Thorpe, villages.

⁵ cow-barns.

⁶ Here apparently mid-afternoon.

⁷ Most MSS. read *but*.

⁸ That is, from hawking.

⁹ in spite of all resistance.

Somme seyde, that our hertes been most esed

Whan that we been y-flatered and y-pleded.
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;
And with attendance and with bisnesse
Been we y-lymed,¹ both more and lesse.

And somme seyn, how that we loven best
For to be free, and do right as us lest, ⁸⁰
And that no man repreve us of our vyce,
But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing
nyce.²

For trewely, ther is noon of us alle,
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,
That we nil kike,³ for he seith us sooth;
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.
For be we never so vicious with-inne,
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of
sinne.

And somme seyn, that greet delyt han we

For to ben holden stable and eek secree, ⁹⁰
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreie thing that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;⁴
Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing hele;⁵
Witnesse on Myda;⁶ wol ye here the tale?

Ovyde, amonges other thinges smale,
Seyde Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,
The whiche vyce he hidde, as he best
michte,

Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte, ¹⁰⁰
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it namo.
He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;
He preyede hir, that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure.

She swoor him nay, for al this world
to winne,

She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.
But natheles, hir thoughte that she dyde,⁷
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde; ¹¹⁰
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir
herte,

That nedely som word hir moste asterte;⁸

¹ caught, as birds by lime-twigs.

² silly.

³ If any touch us on a tender spot we'll kick. Some MSS. have *like* for *kike*, giving the meaning — if any stroke our wound gently we will like it.

⁴ rake-handle — still used in English dialects.

⁵ know how to conceal nothing.

⁶ Midas, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XI, 174, though the versions do not agree.

⁷ it seemed to her as if she must perish.

⁸ she had to say something.

And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys⁹ faste by she ran;
Til she came there, hir herte was a-fyre,
And, as a bitore bombleth¹⁰ in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth un-to the water doun:
'Biwreie me nat, thou water, with thy
soun,'

Quod she, 'to thee I telle it, and namo; ¹¹⁰
Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two!
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;
I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'
Heer may ye se, though we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot, we can no conseil hyde;
The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.

This knight, of which my tale is specially,

Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come
therby,

This is to seye, what wommen loven moost,
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the
goost; ¹³⁰

But hoom he gooth, he mighte not so-
journe.

The day was come that hoomward moste
he tourne;

And in his wey it happed him to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest-syde,
Wher-as he saugh up-on ¹¹ a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;
Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful
yerne,¹²

In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne.
But certeinly, er he came fully there,
Vanished was this daunce, he niste
where. ¹⁴⁰

No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sittinge ?
wyf;

A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan ryse,
And seyde, 'Sir knight, heer-forth ne lytl
no wey.

Tel me what that ye seken, by your fey.
Paraventure it may the bettre be;
Thise olde folk can muchel thing,' quod she
'My leve mooder,' quod this knight, 'cer-
teyn

I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn ¹⁵⁰
What thing it is that wommen most de-
syre;

Coude ye me wisse,¹³ I wolde wel quyte
your hyre.'¹⁴

⁹ marsh.

¹⁰ as a bittren bumbles or booms.

¹¹ in.

¹² eagerly.

¹³ show.

¹⁴ reward you.

'Plight me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand,' quod she,

'The nexte thing that I requere thee, Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might; And I wol telle it yow er it be night.'

'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knight, 'I grante.'

'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel avante,

Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby; Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I. ¹⁶⁰ Lat see which is the proudeste of hem alle, That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,¹ That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee teche;

Lat us go forth with-uten lenger speche.' Tho rouned she a pistol² in his ere, And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.

Whan they be comen to the court, this knight

Seyde he had holde his day as he hadde hight,³

And redy was his answer, as he sayde.

Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde, ¹⁷⁰

And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse, The quene hir-self sittinge as a justyse, Assembled been, his answer for to here; And afterward this knight was bode appere.

To every wight comanded was silence, And that the knight sholde telle in audience,

What thing that worldly women loven best.

This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,

But to his questioun anon answerde

With manly voys, that al the court it herde: ¹⁸⁰

'My lige lady, generally,' quod he, 'Women desyren to have sovereyntee

As wel over hir housbond as hir love, And for to been in maistrie him above; This is your moste desyr, thogh ye me kille, Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.'

In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde, Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde, But seyden he was worthy han his lyf.

And with that word up stirte the olde wyf, ¹⁹⁰

Which that the knight saugh sittinge in the grene:

'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady quene!

Er that your court departe, do me right. I taughte this answer un-to the knight; For which he plighte me his trouthe there, The firste thing I wolde of him requere, He wolde it do, if it lay in his might. Bifore the court than preye I thee, sir knight,'

Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy wyf;

For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf. ²⁰⁰

If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!'

This knight answerde, 'Allas! and weylaway!

I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.'

For Goddes love, as chees a newe requeste; Tak al my good, and lat my body go.'

'Nay than,' quod she, 'I shrewe us bothe two!

For thogh that I be foul, and old, and pore, I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore, That under erthe is grave, or lyth above, But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.'

'My love?' quod he; 'nay, my dampnacion! ²¹¹

Allas! that any of my nacioun Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!'

But al for noght, the ende is this, that he Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir wedde;

And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde.

Now wollden som men seye, paraventure, That, for my negligence, I do no cure To tellen yow the joye and al th'array That at the feste was that ilke day. ²²⁰

To whiche thing shortly answer I shal;

I seye, ther nas no joye ne feste at al, Ther nas but hevynesse and muche sorwe; For prively he wedded hir on a morwe, And al day after hidde him as an oule; So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.

Greet was the wo the knight hadde in his thought,

Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde y-brought;

He walweth,⁵ and he turneth to and fro.

His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo, ²³⁰

And seyde, 'O dere housbond, benedicite! Fareh every knight thus with his wyf as ye?

Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous? Is every knight of his so dangerous? ⁶

⁴ promise. ⁵ wallows, turns. ⁶ distant.

¹ caul, head-dress. ² whispered a tale. ³ promised.

I am your owene love and eek your wyf;
 I am she which that saved hath your lyf;
 And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;
 Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
 Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit;
 What is my gilt? for Goddes love, tel me
 it, 240

And it shal been amended, if I may.
 'Amended?' quod this knight, 'allas!
 nay, nay!

It wol nat been amended never mo!
 Thou art so loothly, and so old also,
 And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,
 That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and
 winde.¹

So wolde God myn herte wolde brestel!
 'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your
 unreste?'

'Ye, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder is.'
 'Now, sire,' quod she, 'I coude amende
 al this, 250

If that me liste, er it were dayes three,
 So wel ye mighte bere yow un-to me.

But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
 As is descended out of old richesse,
 That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
 Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
 Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
 Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay
 To do the gentil dedes that he can,
 And tak him for the grettest gentil man.
 Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentil-
 lesse, 261

Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.
 For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
 For which we clayme to been of heigh par-
 age,²

Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,
 To noon of us hir vertuous living,
 That made hem gentil men y-called be;
 And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

Wel can the wyse poete of Florence,
 That highte Dant, speken in this sentence;
 Lo in swich maner rym³ is Dantes tale: 271
 "Ful selde⁴ up ryseth by his branches
 smale

Prowesse of man; for God, of his good-
 nesse,
 Wol that of him we clayme our gentil-
 lesse;"

For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme
 But temporel thing, that man may hurte
 and mayne.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,
 If gentillesse were planted naturelly
 Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,
 Privee ne apert, than wolde they never
 fyne⁵ 280

To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;
 They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.

Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
 Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
 And lat menshette the dores and go thenne;
 Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
 As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde;
 His office naturel ay wol it holde,
 Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.

Heer may ye see wel, how that genterye
 Is nat annexed to possessioun, 291
 Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
 Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lol in his kinde.
 For, God it woot, men may wel often finde
 A lordes sone do shame and vileinye;
 And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,
 And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
 And nol him-selven do no gentil dedis,
 Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is,
 He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl; 301
 For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.

For gentillesse nis but renomee⁶
 Of thyn auncestres, for hir heigh bountee,
 Which is a strange thing to thy persone.
 Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone;
 Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace,
 It was no-thing biquethe us with our place.

Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius,⁷
 Was thilke Tullius Hostilius, 310
 That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.
 Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,
 Ther shul ye seen expres that it no drede⁸
 is,

That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis;
 And therfore, leve housbond, I thus con-
 clude,

Al were it that myne auncestres were rude,
 Yet may the hye God, and so hope I,
 Grante me grace to liven vertuously.
 Thanne am I gentil, whan that I biginne
 To liven vertuously and weyve⁹ sinne. 320

And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,
 The hye God, on whom that we bileve,
 In wilful povert chees to live his lyf.

And certes every man, mayden, or wyf,

⁵ cease.

⁶ renown.

⁷ Valerius Maximus (first century A.D.) bk. III, chap. 4, of his *De Factis Dictisque Memorabilibus*.

⁸ doubt.

⁹ shun.

¹ twist.

² rhyme. — *Purgatorio*, VII, 121.

³ kindred.

⁴ seldom.

May understonde that Jesus, hevene king,
 Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.
 Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn;
 This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.
 Who-so that halt him payd¹ of his poverte,
 I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte,
 He that coveyteth is a povre wight, ³³¹
 For he wolde han that is nat in his might.
 But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth have,
 Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a
 knave.

Verray povert, it singeth proprely;
 Juvenal seith of povert merily:
 "The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
 Bifore the theves he may singe and pleye."²
 Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
 A ful greet bringer out of businesse; ³⁴⁰
 A greet amender eek of sapience
 To him that taketh it in pacience.³
 Povert is this, al-though it seme elenge⁴
 Possessioun, that no wight wol challenge.
 Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
 Maketh his God and eek him-self to knowe.⁵
 Povert a spectacle⁶ is, as thinketh me,
 Thurgh which he may his verray frendes
 see.

And therefore, sire, sin that I noght yow
 greve,

Of my povert na-more ye me repreve. ³⁵⁰

Now, sire, of elde⁷ ye repreve me;
 And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
 Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
 Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon
 favour,

And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;
 And auctours⁸ shal I finden, as I gesse.

Now ther ye seye that I am foul and old,
 Than drede you noght to be a cokewold;
 For filthe and elde, al-so mote I thee,
 Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee. ³⁶⁰
 But natheless, sir I knowe your delyt,
 I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.

Chees now,⁹ quod she, 'oon of thise
 thinges tweye, —

To han me foul and old til that I deye,
 And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
 And never yow displese in al my lyf,
 Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
 And take your aventure⁹ of the repair

That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me,
 Or in som other place, may wel be. ³⁷⁰
 Now chees your-selven, whether¹⁰ that yow
 lyketh.'

This knight avyseth him and sore syk-
 eth,¹¹

But atte laste he seyde in this manere,
 'My lady and my love, and wyf so dere,
 I put me in your wyse governance;
 Cheseth your-self, which may be most ples-
 ance,

And most honour to yow and me also.
 I do no fors the whether¹² of the two;
 For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.'

'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,'
 quod she, ³⁸⁰

'Sin I may chese, and governe as me lest?'
 'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it
 best.'

'Kis me,' quod she, 'we be no lenger
 wrothe;

For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,
 This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
 I prey to God that I mot sterven wood,¹³
 But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
 As ever was wyf, sin that the world was
 newe.

And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene
 As any lady, emperyce, or queene, ³⁹⁰
 That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
 Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow
 lest.

Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.'
 And whan the knight saugh verrailly al
 this,

That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,
 For joye he hente hir in his armes two,
 His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
 A thousand tyme a-rewe¹⁴ he gan hir kisse.
 And she obeyed him in every thing ³⁹⁹
 That mighte doon him plesance or lyking.

And thus they live, un-to hir lyves ende,
 In parfit joye; and Jesu Crist us sende
 Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe
 a-bedde,

And grace t'overbyde¹⁵ hem that we wedde.
 And eek I preye Jesu shorte hir lyves
 That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
 And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,
 God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

¹ pleased.

² Juvenal's *Satires*, X, 22.

³ These sentiments are found in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, bk. X, chap. 71, and in other writers.

⁴ wearisome.

⁵ Causes a man to know himself and God.

⁶ lens, pair of spectacles.

⁷ age.

⁸ authorities to support me in this.

⁹ risk.

¹⁰ whichever of the two.

¹¹ I care not which.

¹² in succession.

¹³ sighs.

¹⁴ die mad.

¹⁵ outlive.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

MANY men seyn that in sweveninges¹
 Ther nis but fables and lesinges;²
 But men may somme swevenes seen,
 Which hardely³ ne false been,
 But afterward ben apparaunte.
 This may I drawe to waraunte
 An outhour, that hight Macrobes,
 That halt not dremes false ne lees,²
 But undoth⁴ us the avisoun
 That whylom mette king Cipoun.⁵

And who-so sayth, or weneth it be
 A jape, or elles nycetes⁶
 To wene that dremes after falle,
 Let who-so liste a fool me calle.
 For this trowe I, and say for me,
 That dremes signifaunce be
 Of good and harme to many wightes,
 That dremen in her slepe a-nights
 Ful many thinges covertly,
 That fallen after al openly.

THE DREAM

Within my twenty yere of age,
 Whan that Love taketh his corage⁷
 Of yonge folk, I wente sone
 To bedde, as I was wont to done,
 And fast I sleep; and in sleping,
 Me mette⁸ swiche a swevening,
 That lykede me wonders wel;
 But in that sweven is never a del
 That it nis afterward befallé,
 Right as this dreem wol telle us alle.
 Now this dreem wol I ryme aright,
 To make your hertes gaye and light;
 For Love it prayeth, and also
 Commandeth me that it be so.
 And if ther any aske me,
 Whether that it be he or she,
 How this booke which is here
 Shall hatte,⁹ that I rede you here;
 It is the Romance of the Rose,
 In which al the art of love I close.

The mater fair is of to make;
 God graunte in gree¹⁰ that she it take
 For whom that it begonnen is!
 And that is she that hath, y-wis,

So mochel prys; and ther-to she
 So worthy is biloved be,
 That she wel oughte, of prys and right,
 Be cleped Rose of every wight.

That it was May me thoughte tho —
 It is fyve yere or more ago; 30
 That it was May, thus dremed me,
 In tyme of love and jolitee,
 That al thing ginneth waxen gay,
 For ther is neither busk nor hay¹¹
 In May, that it nil shrouded been,
 And it with newe leves wreen.¹²
 These wodes eek recoveren grene,
 That drye in winter been to sene;
 And th' erthe wexeth proud withalle,
 For swote¹³ dewes that on it falle, 60
 And al the pore estat forget
 In which that winter hadde it set;
 And than bi cometh the ground so proud
 That it wol have a newe shroud,
 And maketh so queynt his robe and fayr
 That it hath hewes an hundred payr
 Of gras and floures, inde and pers,¹⁴
 And many hewes ful dyvers:
 That is the robe I mene, y-wis,
 Through which the ground to preisen is. 70

The briddes, that han left hir song,
 Why! they han suffred cold so strong
 In wedres¹⁵ grille,¹⁶ and derk to sighte,
 Ben in May, for the sonne brighte,
 So glade, that they shewe in singing
 That in hir herte is swich lyking
 That they mote singen and be light.
 Than doth the nightingale hir might
 To make noyse, and singen blythe.
 Than is blisful, many a sythe,¹⁷ 80
 The chelaundre¹⁸ and the papingay.¹⁹
 Than yonge folk entenden²⁰ ay
 For to ben gay and amorous,
 The tyme is than so savorous.²¹
 Hard is his herte that loveth nought
 In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;
 Whan he may on these braunches here
 The smale briddes singen clere
 Hir blisful swete song pitous;
 And in this scharpe delituous, 90

¹ dreams. ² lies. ³ surely. ⁴ explains. ⁵ The *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, known in the commentary by Macrobius (fl. 400 A.D.). ⁶ A joke or a silly thing. ⁷ liking. ⁸ I dreamed. ⁹ be called. ¹⁰ favor.

¹¹ bush nor hedge. ¹² cover. ¹³ sweet. ¹⁴ dark blue and light blue. ¹⁵ storms. ¹⁶ savage. ¹⁷ time. ¹⁸ a kind of lark. ¹⁹ properly parrot; here green woodpecker. ²⁰ are disposed. ²¹ pleasant. ²² delightful.

Whan love affrayeth¹ alle thing,
 Me thoughte a-night, in my sleping,
 Right in my bed, ful redily,
 That it was by the morowe erly,
 And up I roos and gan me clothe;
 Anoon I wissh² myn hondes bothe;
 A sylvre nedle forth I drogh
 Out of an aguiler³ queynt y-nogh,
 And gan this nedle threde anon;
 For out of toun me list to gon
 The sowne of briddes for to here,
 That on thise bussches singen clere.
 And in the swete sesoun that leef⁴ is,
 With a threde basting my slevis,⁵
 Aloon I wente in my playing,
 The smale foules song harkning;
 That peyned hem⁶ ful many a payre
 To singe on bowes blommed fayre.
 Jolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,
 Toward a river I gan me dresse,
 That I herde renne faste by;
 For fairer playing non saugh I
 Than playen me by that riveer,
 For from an hille that stood ther neer
 Cam down the stream ful stif and bold.
 Cleer was the water, and as cold
 As any welle is, sooth to seyne;
 And somdel lasse it was than Seine,
 But it was straighter wel away.
 And never saugh I, er that day,
 The water that so wel lyked⁷ me;
 And wonder glad was I to see
 That lusty place, and that riveer;
 And with that water that ran so cleer
 My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel
 The botme paved everydel
 With gravel, ful of stones shene.
 The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
 Beet⁸ right on the water-syde.
 Ful cleer was than the morow-tyde,
 And ful attempre,⁹ out of drede.
 Tho gan I walke through the mede,
 Downward ay in my pleying,
 The river-syde costeying.¹⁰

THE GARDEN

And whan I had a whyle goon,
 I saugh a GARDIN right anoon,
 Ful long and brood, and everydel
 Enclosed was, and walled wel,
 With hye walles embatailled,
 Portrayed without, and wel entailed¹¹

¹ distracts. ² washed. ³ needle-case. ⁴ dear.
⁵ They often sewed on the long drooping sleeves each
 time the garment was donned. ⁶ took pains. ⁷ pleased.
⁸ Impinged. ⁹ temperate. ¹⁰ coasting, following
 along. ¹¹ decorated.

With many riche portraitures;
 And bothe images and peyntures
 Gan I biholde bisily.
 And I wol telle you, redily,
 Of thilke images the semblaunce,
 As fer as I have remembraunce.

HATE

A-midde saugh I HATE stonde,
 That for hir wrathe, ire, and onde,¹²
 Semed to been a moveresse,¹³
 An angry wight, a chideresse;¹⁴
 And ful of gyle, and fel corage,¹⁵
 By semblaunt was that ilke image.
 And she was no-thing wel arrayed,
 But lyk a wood¹⁶ womman afrayed;
 Y-frounced¹⁷ foule was hir visage,
 And grenning¹⁸ for dispitous¹⁹ rage;
 Hir nose snorted up for tene.²⁰
 Ful hidous was she for to sene,
 Ful foul and rusty was she, this.
 Hir heed y-writhen²¹ was, y-wis,
 Ful grimly with a greet towayle.

FELONYE

An image of another entayle,²²
 A lift half,²³ was hir faste by:
 Hir name above hir heed saugh I,
 And she was called FELONYE.

VILANYE

Another image, that VILANYE
 Y-cleped was, saugh I and fond
 Upon the walle on hir right hond.
 Vilanye was lyk somdel²⁴
 That other image; and, trusteth wel,
 She semed a wikked creature.
 By countenance, in portrayture,
 She semed be ful despitous,
 And eek ful proud and outrageous.
 Wel coude he peynte, I undertake,
 That swiche image coude make.
 Ful foul and cherlish semed she,
 And eek vilaynous for to be,
 And litel coude of norture,
 To worshipe any creature.²⁵

[The descriptions of Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, and Poverty are omitted.]

Tho gan I go a ful gret pas
 Envyrning even in compas²⁶
 The closing of the square wal,
 Til that I fond a wicket smal

¹² malice. ¹³ fomentress of quarrels. ¹⁴ scolder.
¹⁵ bad disposition. ¹⁶ mad. ¹⁷ wrinkled. ¹⁸ grinning.
¹⁹ spiteful. ²⁰ vexation. ²¹ encircled. ²² fashion. ²³ On
 the left side. ²⁴ somewhat. ²⁵ knew little of manners
 to be polite to any. ²⁶ Going quite about the circuit.

So shet, that I ne mighte in goon,
And other entree was ther noon.

530

THE DOOR

Upon this dore I gan to smyte,
That was [so] fetys¹ and so lyte;
For other wey coude I not seke.
Ful long I shoof,² and knocked eke,
And stood ful long and oft herknning
If that I herde a wight coming;
Til that the dore of thilke entree
A mayden curteys opened me.

YDELNESSE

Hir heer was as yelowe of hewe
As any basin³ scoured newe.
Hir flesh [as] tendre as is a chike,
With bente⁴ browes, smothe and slike;
And by mesure large were
The opening of hir yën clere.
Hir nose of good proporcioun,
Hir yën greye as a faucoun,
With swete breeth and wel savoured.
Hir face whyt and wel coloured,
With litel mouth, and round to see;
A clove⁵ chin eek hadde she.
Hir nekke was of good fasoun
In lengthe and gretnesse, by resoun,
Withoute bleyne, scabbe, or royne.⁶
Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoyne
Ther nis a fairer nekke, y-wis,
To fele how smothe and softe it is.
Hir throte, al-so whyt of hewe
As snow on braunche snowed newe.
Of body ful wel wrought was she;
Men neded not, in no cuntree,
A fairer body for to seke.
And of fyn orfrays⁷ had she eke
A chapelet: so semly oon
Ne wered never mayde upon;
And faire above that chapelet
A rose gerland had she set.
She hadde [in honde] a gay⁸ mirour,
And with a riche gold tressour⁹
Hir heed was tressed queyntely;
Hir sleeves sewed fetisly.
And for to kepe hir hondes faire
Of gloves whyte she hadde a paire.
And she hadde on a cote of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt;¹⁰ withouten wene,¹¹
Wel semed by hir apparayle

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She was not wont to greet travayle.
For whan she kempt¹² was fetisly,
And wel arayed and richely,
Thanne had she doon al hir journee;¹³
For mery and wel bigoon¹⁴ was she. 580
She ladde a lusty lyf in May,
She hadde no thought, by night ne day,
Of no-thing, but it were oonly
To graythe¹⁵ hir wel and uncouthly.¹⁶
Whan that this dore hadde opened me
This mayden, semely for to see,
I thanked hir as I best mighte,
And axede hir how that she highte,¹⁷
And what she was, I axede eke.
And she to me was nought unmeke, 590
Ne of hir answer daungerous,¹⁸
But faire answerde, and seide thus:—
'Lo, sir, my name is YDELNESSE;
So clepe men me, more and lesse.
Ful mighty and ful riche am I,
And that of oon thing, namely;¹⁹
For I entende²⁰ to no-thing
But to my joye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse²¹ me.
Aqueynted am I, and privee 600
With Mirthe, lord of this gardyn,
That fro the lande Alexandryn
Made the trees be hider fet,
That in this gardin been y-set.
And when the trees were woxen²² on highte,
This wal, that stant here in thy sighte,
Dide Mirthe enclosen²³ al aboute;
And these images, al withoute,
He dide hem bothe entaile²⁴ and peynte,
That neither ben jolyf ne queynte, 610
But they ben ful of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast seen a whyle ago.
'And ofte tyme, him to solace,
Sir Mirthe cometh into this place,
And eek with him cometh his meynee,
That liven in lust and jolitee.
And now is Mirthe therin, to here
The briddes, how they singen clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And other joly briddes smale. 620
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folk; for swetter place
To pleyen in he may not finde,
Although he soughte oon in-til Inde.
The alther-fairest²⁵ folk to see
That in this world may founde be

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¹ well-made. ² shoved. ³ The basin would be of latten. ⁴ arched. ⁵ cloven, i.e. dimpled. ⁶ roughness. ⁷ gold-work. ⁸ pretty. ⁹ head-dress, caul. ¹⁰ Ghent. ¹¹ beyond doubt.

¹² combed, dressed. ¹³ day's work. ¹⁴ satisfied. ¹⁵ clothe. ¹⁶ rarely. ¹⁷ was called. ¹⁸ haughty. ¹⁹ especially. ²⁰ apply myself. ²¹ do my hair. ²² waxed. ²³ had it enclosed. ²⁴ carve. ²⁵ fairest of all.

Hath Mirthe with him in his route,
That folowen him alwayes aboute.¹

When Ydelnesse had told al this,
And I hadde herkned wel, y-wis,
Than seide I to dame Ydelnesse,
'Now al-so wisly¹ God me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so fair and free,
Is in this yerde with his meynee,²
Fro thilke assemblee, if I may,
Shal no man werne³ me to-day,
That I this night ne mote it see.
For, wel wene I, ther⁴ with him be
A fair and joly companye
Fulfilled of alle curtesye.⁵
And forth, without wordes mo,
In at the wicket wente I tho,
That Ydelnesse hadde opened me,
Into that gardin fair to see.

THE GARDEN

And whan I was [ther]in, y-wis,
Myn herte was ful glad of this.
For wel wende I ful sikerly
Have been in paradys erth[e]ly;
So fair it was, that, trusteth wel,
It semed a place espirituel.
For certes, as at my devys,
Ther is no place in paradys
So good in for to dwelle or be
As in that GARDIN, thoughte me;
For there was many a brid singing,
Throughout the yerd al thringing.⁴
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes,⁵ finches, and wodewales,⁶
That in her swete song delysten
In thilke place as they habytē.⁷
Ther mighte men see many flokkes
Of turtles and [of] laverokkes.
Chalaundres⁸ fele saw I there,
That wery, nigh forsongen⁹ were.
And thrustles, terins,¹⁰ and mavys,¹¹
That songen for to winne hem prys,¹²
And eek to sormounte in hir song
These other briddes hem among.
By note made fair servyse
These briddes, that I you devyse;
They songe hir song as faire and wel
As angels doon espirituel.
And, trusteth wel, whan I hem herde,
Full lustily and wel I ferde;
For never yit swich melodye
Was herd of man that mighte dye.

630

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670

Swich swete song was hem among,
That me thoughte it no briddes song,
But it was wonder lyk to be
Song of mermaydens of the see; 680
That, for her singing is so clere,
Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
In English, as in our usaunce,
Men clepe[n] hem sereyns¹³ in Fraunce.

Ententif¹⁴ weren for to singe
These briddes that nought unknunge
Were of hir craft, and apprentys,
But of [hir] song sotyl and wys.
And certes, whan I herde hir song,
And saw the grene place among, 690
In herte I wex so wonder gay,
That I was never erst, er that day,
So jolyf, nor so wel bigo,
Ne mery in herte, as I was tho.
And than wiste I, and saw ful wel,
That Ydelnesse me served wel,
That me putte in swich jolitee.
Hir freend wel oughte I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardyn
Hadde opened, and me leten in. 700

From hennesforth how that I wroughte,
I shal you tellen, as me thoughte.
First, whereof Mirthe served¹⁵ there,
And eek what folk ther with him were,
Without[e] fable I wol descryve.
And of that gardin eek as blyve¹⁶
I wol you tellen after this.
The faire fasoun al, y-wis,
That wel [y-]wrought was for the nones,
I may not telle you al on es: 710
But as I may and can, I shal
By ordre tellen you it al.

Ful fair servyse and eek ful swete
These briddes maden as they sete.
Layes of love, ful wel sowing
They songen in hir jargonig;
Summe highe and summe eek lowe songe
Upon the braunches grene y-spronge.
The sweetnesse of hir melodye 720
Made al myn herte in reverdye.¹⁷
And whan that I hadde herd, I trowe,
These briddes singing on a rowe,
Than mighte I not withholde me
That I ne wente¹⁸ in for to see
Sir Mirthe; for my desiring
Was him to seen, over alle thing,
His countenance and his manere:
That sighte was to me ful dere.

¹ so sure as. ² retinue. ³ forbid. ⁴ thringing.
⁵ Bullfinches. ⁶ green woodpeckers. ⁷ In that place
which they inhabit. ⁸ Larks. ⁹ sung out. ¹⁰ tarins,
siskins. ¹¹ song-thrush. ¹² reputation.

¹³ sirens. ¹⁴ Eager. ¹⁵ employed himself.
¹⁶ immediately. ¹⁷ rejoicing. ¹⁸ from going.

THE PARLEMENT OF FOULES

THE PROEM

THE lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,

Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dredful joye, that alwey slit so yerne,¹
Al this mene I by love, that my feling
Astonyeth with his wonderful worching
So sore y-wis, that whan I on him thinke,
Nat wot I wel wher that I wake or winke.

For al be that I knowe not love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quytheth folk hir hyre,
Yet happeth me ful ofte in bokes rede ¹⁰
Of his miracles, and his cruel yre;
Ther rede I wel he wol be lord and syre,
I dar not seyn, his strokes been so sore,
But God save swich a lord! I can no more.

Of usage, what for luste what for lore,²
On bokes rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.
But wherfor that I speke al this? Not yore
Agon hit happed me for to beholde
Upon a boke, was write with lettres olde;
And ther-upon, a certeyn thing to lerne, ²⁰
The longe day ful faste I radde and yerne.³

For out of olde feldes, as men seith,
Cometh al this newe corn fro yeer to yere;
And out of olde bokes, in good feith,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.⁴
But now to purpos as of this matere —
To rede forth hit gan me so delyte,
That al the day me thoughte but a lyte.

This book of which I make mencion,
Entitled was al thus, as I shal telle, ³⁰
'Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun';⁵
Chapitres seven hit hadde, of hevene and helle,

And erthe, and soules that therinne dwelle,
Of whiche, as shortly as I can hit trete,
Of his sentence I wol you seyn the grete.⁶

¹ slideth, slips away, so soon.

² Habitually, sometimes for pleasure, sometimes for edification.

³ I read closely and eagerly.

⁴ Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in the commentary of Macrobius. See line 111, below.

⁵ learn.

⁶ gist.

First telleth hit, whan Scipioun was come
In Afrik, how he mette Massinisse,
That him for joye in armes hath y-nome.⁷
Than telleth hit hir speche and al the blisse
That was betwix hem, till the day gan misse;⁸ ⁴⁰

And how his auncestre, African so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night to him appere.

Than telleth hit that, fro a sterry place,
How African bath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of al his grace,
And seyde him, what man, lered other lewed,

That loveth comun profit, wel y-thewed,⁹
He shal unto a blisful place wende,
Ther as joye is that last withouten ende.

Than asked he if folk that heer be dede ⁵⁰
Have lyf and dwelling in another place;
And African seyde, 'Ye, withoute drede,'
And that our present worldes lyves space
Nis but a maner deth, what way we trace,
And rightful folk shal go, after they dye,
To heven; and shewed him the galaxye.

Than shewed he him the litel erthe, that heer is,
At regard of ¹⁰ the hevenes quantite;
And after shewed he him the nyne speres,¹¹
And after that the melodye herde he ⁶⁰
That cometh of thilke speres thryes three,
The welle ¹² is of musyke and melodye
In this world heer, and cause of armorye.

Than bad he him, sin erthe was so lyte,
And ful of torment and of harde grace,
That he ne shulde him in the world delyte.
Than tolde he him, in certyn yeres space,
That every sterre shulde come into his place
Ther hit was first; and al shulde ¹³ out of minde ⁶⁹

That in this worlde is don of al mankinde.

Than prayde him Scipioun to telle him al
The way to come un-to that hevene blisse;

⁷ taken. ⁸ fail. ⁹ virtuous. ¹⁰ As compared with. ¹¹ spheres. ¹² source. ¹³ Supply "depart."

And he seyde, 'Know thy-self first im-
mortal,
And loke ay besily thou werke and wisse¹
To comun profit, and thou shalt nat misse
To comen swiftly to that place dere,
That ful of blisse is and of soules clere.

But brekers of the lawe, soth to seyne,
And lecherous folk, after that they be
dede,

Shul alwey whirle aboute th'erthe in peyne,
Til many a world be passed, out of drede,
And than, for-yeven alle hir wikked dede,
Than shul they come unto that blisful
place,
To which to comen God thee sende his
grace!'—

The day gan failen, and the derke night,
That reveth bestes from hir besinesse,
Berafte me my book for lakke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfil of thought and besy hevinesse;
For bothe I hadde thing which that I
nolde,
And eek I ne haude that thing that I
wolde.

But fynally my spirit, at the laste,
For-wery of my labour al the day,
Took rest, that made me to slepe faste,
And in my slepe I mette,² as I lay,
How African, right in that selfe aray
That Scipioun him saw before that tyde,
Was comen, and stood right at my beddes
syde.

The wery hunter, slepinge in his bed,
To wode ayein his minde goth anon;
The juge dremeth how his plees ben sped;
The carter dremeth how his cartes goon;
The riche, of gold; the knight fight with
his foon,³
The seke met he drinketh of the tonne;
The lover met he hath his lady wonne.

Can I nat seyn if that the cause were
For I had red of African beforne,
That made me to mete that he stood there;
But thus seyde he, 'Thou hast thee so wel
born
In loking of myn olde book to-torn,
Of which Macrobie roghte nat a lyte,
That somdel of thy labour wolde I quyte!'—

Citherea! thou blisful lady swete,
That with thy fyr-brand dauntest whom
thee lest,
And madest me this sweven for to mete,
Be thou my help in this, for thou mayst
best;
As wisly as I saw thee north-north-west,
When I began my sweven for to wryte,
So yif me might to ryme hit and endyte!

THE STORY

This forseid African me hente anon,
And forth with him unto a gate broghte
Right of a parke, walled with grene stoon;
And over the gate, with lettres large y-
wroghte,
Ther weren vers y-written, as me thoghte,
On eyther halfe, of ful gret difference,
Of which I shal yow sey the pleyn sen-
tence.

'Thorgh me men goon in-to that blisful
place
Of hertes hele and dedly woundes cure;
Thorgh me men goon unto the welle of
Grace,
Ther grene and lusty May shal ever en-
dure;
This is the wey to al good aventure;
Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorwe of-
caste;
Al open am I; passe in, and by the faste!'

'Thorgh me men goon,' than spak that
other syde,
'Unto the mortal strokes of the spere,
Of which Disdayn and Daunger is the
gyde,
Ther tree shal never fruit ne leves bere.
This stream you ledeth to the sorwful
were,⁴
Ther as the fish in prison is al drye;
Th'eschewing is only the remedye.'

Thise vers of gold and blak y-written were,
The whiche I gan a stounde⁵ to beholde,
For with that oon encreased ay my fere,
And with that other gan myn herte bolde.
That oon me hette, that other did me
colde;
No wit had I, for errour, for to chese,
To entre or flee, or me to save or lese.

¹ teach. ² dreamed. ³ foes. A.S. *gefan*.

⁴ fish-weir.

⁵ a while.

Right as, betwixen adamauntes¹ two
 Of even might, a pece of iren y-set,
 That hath no might to meve to ne fro—¹⁵⁰
 For what that on may hale, that other let—²
 Ferde I, that niste whether me was bet,³
 To entre or leve, til African my gyde
 Me hente, and shoof⁴ in at the gates wyde,

And seyde, 'Hit stondeth writen in thy
 face,
 Thyn errour, though thou telle it not to
 me;
 But dred thee nat to come in-to this place,
 For this wryting is no-thing ment by⁶ thee,
 Ne by noon, but he Loves servant be;
 For thou of love hast lost thy tast, I
 gesse,¹⁶⁰
 As seek man hath of swete and bitternesse.

But natheles, al-though that thou be dulle,
 Yit that thou canst not do, yit mayst thou
 see;
 For many a man that may not stonde a
 pulle,
 Yit lyketh him at the wrastling for to be,
 And demeth yit wher he do bet or he;
 And if thou haddest cunning for t'endyte,
 I shal thee shewen mater of to wryte.'

With that my hond in his he took anon,
 Of which I comfort caughte, and wente in
 faste;¹⁷⁰
 But lord! so I was glad and wel begoon!⁶
 For over-al, wher that I myn eyen caste,
 Were treës clad with leves that ay shal
 laste,
 Eche in his kinde, of colour fresh and grene
 As emeraude, that joye was to sene.

The bilder ook, and eek the hardy asshe;
 The piler⁷ elm, the cofre unto careyne;⁸
 The boxtree piper;⁹ holm to whippes
 lasshe;¹⁰
 The sayling¹¹ firr; the cipres, deth to
 pleyne;¹⁷⁹
 The sheter¹² ew, the asp for shaftes pleyne;
 The olyve of pees, and eek the drunken
 vyne,
 The victor palm, the laurer to devyne.¹⁸

¹ magnets. ² one pulls, the other hinders. ³ knew
 not which was better for me. ⁴ seized and shoved.
⁵ concerning. ⁶ situated. ⁷ for posts. ⁸ coffins
 for corpses. ⁹ for making whistles. ¹⁰ Apparently,
 furnishing handles for lashes. ¹¹ good for masts.
¹² "shooter," because used for bows. ¹³ used in
 divination.

A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowes,
 Upon a river, in a grene mede,
 Ther as that swetnesse evermore y-now is,
 With floures whyte, blew, yelow, and
 rede;

And colde welle-stremes, no-thing dede,
 That swommen ful of smale fisshes lighte,
 With finnes rede and scales silver-brighte.

On every bough the briddes herde I singe,
 With voys of aungel in hir armonye,¹⁹¹
 Som besyed hem hir briddes forth to
 bringe.¹⁴

The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hye;
 And further al aboute I gan espye
 The dredful¹⁵ roo, the buk, the hert and
 hinde,
 Squerels, and bestes smale of gentil kinde.

Of instruments of strenges in acord
 Herde I so pleye a ravissing swetnesse,
 That God, that maker is of al and lord,
 Ne herde never better, as I gesse;²⁰⁰
 Therwith a wind, unneth¹⁶ hit might be
 lesse,
 Made in the leves grene a noise softe
 Acordant to the foules songe on-lofte.

The air of that place so attempre¹⁷ was
 That never was grevaunce of hoot ne cold;
 Ther wex eek every holsom spyce and gras,
 Ne no man may ther wexe seek ne old;
 Yet was ther joye more a thousand fold
 Than man can telle; ne never wolde it
 nighte,
 But ay cleer day to any mannes sighte.²¹⁰

Under a tree, besyde a welle, I say
 Cupyde our lord his arwes forge and fyle;
 And at his fete his bowe al redy lay;
 And wel his doghter tempre al the while
 The hedes in the welle, and with hir wyle¹⁸
 She couched¹⁹ hem after as they shulde
 serve,
 Som for to slee, and som to wounde and
 kerve.

Tho was I war of Plesaunce anon-right,
 And of Aray, and Lust, and Curtesye;
 And of the Craft that can and hath the
 might

To doon by force a wight to do folye—²²⁰
 Disfigurat was she, I nil not lye;

¹⁴ to rear their chicks. ¹⁵ timid. ¹⁶ hardly.
¹⁷ temperate. ¹⁸ guile, subtlety. ¹⁹ arranged.

And by him-self, under an oke, I gesse,
Sawe I Delyt, that stood with Gentillesse.

I saw Beautee, withouten any atyr,
And Youthe, ful of game and Jolyte,
Fool-hardinesse, Flatery, and Desyr,
Messagerye, and Mede, and other three —
Hir names shul noght here be told for
me —

And upon pilers greté of jasper longe ²³⁰
I saw a temple of bras y-founded stronge.

Aboute the temple daunceden alway
Wommen y-nowe, of whiche somme ther
were

Faire of hem-self, and somme of hem were
gay;¹

In kirtels, al disshevele, wente they there —
That was hir office alwey, yeer by yere —
And on the temple, of doves whyte and
faire

Saw I sittinge many a hundred paire.

Before the temple-dore ful soberly
Dame Pees sat, with a curteyn in hir
hond : ²⁴⁰

And hir besyde, wonder discretly,
Dame Pacience sitting ther I fond
With face pale, upon an hille of sond;
And alder-next, within and eek withoute,
Behest and Art, and of hir folke a route.

Within the temple, of syghes hote as fyr
I herde a swogh² that gan aboute renne;
Which syghes were engendred with desyr,
That maden every auter for to brenne
Of newe flaume; and wel aspyed I thenne
That al the cause of sorwes that they
drye³ ²⁵¹

Com of the bitter goddesse Jalousye.

The god Priapus saw I, as I wente,
Within the temple, in soverayn place stonde,
In swich aray as whan the asse him shente
With crye by night,⁴ and with his ceptre in
honde;

Ful besily men gunne assaye and fonde
Upon his hede to sette, of sondry hewe,
Garlondes ful of fresshe floures newe.

And in a privee corner, in disporte, ²⁶⁰
Fond I Venus and hir porter Richesse,
That was ful noble and hauteyn of hir porte.

¹ dressed-up.
³ suffer.

² murmur.
⁴ Ovid's *Fasti*, I, 450.

Derk was that place, but afterward light-
nesse

I saw a lyte, unnethe⁵ hit might be lesse;
And on a bed of golde she lay to reste,
Til that the hote sonne gan to weste.

Hir gilte heres with a golden threde
Y-bounden were, untressed as she lay,
And naked fro the breste unto the hede
Men might hir see; and, sothly for to say, ²⁷⁰
The remenant wel kevered to my pay⁶
Right with a subtil kerchief of Valence,⁷
Ther was no thikker cloth of no defence.

The place yaf a thousand savours swote,
And Bachus, god of wyn, sat hir besyde,
And Ceres next, that doth of hunger bote;⁸
And, as I seide, amiddes lay Cipryde,
To whom on knees two yonge folkes cryde
To ben hir help; but thus I leet hir lye,
And ferther in the temple I gan espye ²⁸⁰

That, in dispyte of Diane the chaste,
Ful many a bowe y-broke heng on the wal
Of maydens, suche as gunne hir tymes
waste

In hir servyse; and peynted over al
Of many a story, of which I touche shal
A fewe, as of Calixte⁹ and Athalaunte¹⁰
And many a mayde of which the name I
wante;

Semyramus, Candace,¹¹ and Ereules,
Biblis,¹² Dido, Tisbe and Pirus,
Tristram, Isoude,¹³ Paris, and Achilles, ²⁹⁰
Eleyne,¹⁴ Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Silla,¹⁵ and eek the moder of Romulus —
Alle these were peynted on that other syde,
And al hir love, and in what plyte they
dyde.

Whan I was come ayen into the place
That I of spak, that was so swote and
grene,

Forth welk I tho, my-selven to solace.
Tho was I war wher that ther sat a quene
That, as of light the somer-sonne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure ³⁰⁰
She fairer was than any creature.

⁵ scarcely. ⁶ content. ⁷ thin silk. ⁸ causes
relief from hunger. ⁹ Callisto. ¹⁰ Atalanta, the
fleet-footed. ¹¹ An Indian queen who fascinated
Alexander the Great. ¹² Who loved vainly in Ovid's
Metamorphoses, IX. ¹³ Iseult. ¹⁴ Helen of Troy,
or possibly Lancelot's Elaine. ¹⁵ Scylla of Megara,
whom Minos would not have.

And in a launde, upon an hille of floures,
Was set this noble goddessse Nature;
Of braunches were hir halles and hir boures,
Y-wrought after hir craft and hir mesure;
Ne ther nas foul that cometh of engendrure,¹

That they ne were prest² in hir presence,
To take hir doom and yeve hir audience.

For this was on seynt Valentynes day,
Whan every foul cometh ther to chese
his make, 310

Of every kinde, that men thenke may;
And that so huge a noyse gan they make,
That erthe and see, and tree, and every lake
So ful was, that unneth was ther space
For me to stonde, so ful was al the place.

And right as Aleyn, in the Pleynt of Kinde,³
Devyseth Nature of aray and face,
In swich aray men mighte[n] hir ther finde.
This noble emperesse, ful of grace,
Bad every foul to take his owne place, 320
As they were wont alwey fro yeer to yere,
Seynt Valentynes day, to stonden there.

That is to sey, the foules of ravyne⁴
Were hyst set; and than the foules smale,
That eten as hem nature wolde enclyne,
As worm, or thing of whiche I telle no tale;
But water-foul sat lowest in the dale;
And foul that liveth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so fele,⁵ that wonder was to sene.

Ther mighte men the royal egle finde, 330
That with his sharpe look perceth the sonne;
And other egles of a lower kinde,
Of which that clerkes wel devysen conne.
Ther was the tyraunt with his fethres donne
And greye, I mene the goshawk, that doth
pyne
To briddes for his outrageous ravyne.

The gentil faucon, that with his feet distreyneth⁶

The kinges hond; the hardy sperhawk⁷ eke,
The quayles foo; the merlion⁸ that payneth
Him-self ful ofte the larke for to seke; 340
Ther was the douve, with hir eyen meke;
The jalous swan, ayens his deth that singeth;
The oule eek, that of dethe the bode
bringeth;

The crane the geaunt,⁹ with his trompes
sounne;

The thief, the chogh;¹⁰ and eek the jangling¹¹ pye;

The scorning jay; the eles foo, the heroune;

The false lapwing, ful of trecherye;¹²

The stare,¹³ that the counseyl can bewrye;¹⁴

The tame ruddok;¹⁵ and the coward kyte;

The cok, that orloge is of thorpes lyte;¹⁶ 350

The sparrow, Venus sone; the nightingale,

That clepeth forth¹⁷ the fresshe leves newe;

The swallow, morderer of the foules¹⁸ smale

That maken hony of floures fresshe of hewe;

The wedded turtel, with hir herte trewe;

The pecok, with his aungels fethres brighte;

The fesaunt, scorner of the cok by nighte;

The waker¹⁹ goos; the cunkow ever unkinde;²⁰ 360

The popinjay, ful of delicasye;²¹

The drake, stroyer of his owne kinde; 360

The stork, the wreker of avouterye;²²

The hote cormeraunt of glotonye;

The raven wys, the crow with vois of care;

The throstel olde; the frosty²³ feldefare.

What shulde I seyn? Of foules every kinde
That in this worlde han fethres and stature,
Men mighten in that place assembled finde
Before the noble goddessse Nature.

And everich of hem did his besy cure
Benignely to chese or for to take, 370
By hir acord, his formel²⁴ or his make.

But to the poynt — Nature held on hir honde
A formel egle, of shap the gentileste
That ever she among hir werkes fonde,
The most benigne and the goodlieste;
In hir was every vertu al his reste,
So ferforth,²⁵ that Nature hir-self had blisse
To loke on hir, and ofte hir bek to kisse.

Nature, the vicaire of th'almyghty lorde,
That hoot, cold, hevvy, light, [and] moist
and dreye 380

Hath knit by even noumbre of acorde,

In esy vois began to speke and seye,

'Foules, tak hede of my sentence, I preye,

⁹ giant. ¹⁰ chough, crow. ¹¹ chattering.

¹² because she misleads those seeking her nest.

¹³ starling. ¹⁴ that tells tales. ¹⁵ robin redbreast.

¹⁶ the timepiece of little villages. ¹⁷ announces.

¹⁸ Another reading is *flies*. ¹⁹ watchful. ²⁰ unnatural (about its eggs). ²¹ wantonness. ²² avenger

of adultery. ²³ Because he comes in the winter.

²⁴ the female of a bird of prey. ²⁵ To such a degree.

¹ begetting. ² ready. ³ Alanus de Insulis' *De Planctu Naturae* (c. 1170). ⁴ birds of prey. ⁵ many. ⁶ grasps. ⁷ sparrow-hawk. ⁸ the merlin.

And, for your ese, in furthering of your nede,
As faste as I may speke, I wol me spede.

Ye know wel how, seynt Valentynes day,
By my statut and through my governaunce,
Ye come for to chese — and flee your way —
Your makes, as I prik yow with plesaunce.
But natheles, my rightful ordenaunce ³⁹⁰
May I not lete, for al this world to winne,
That he that most is worthy shal beginne.

The tercel ¹ egle, as that ye knowen wel,
The foul royal above yow in degree,
The wyse and worthy, secree, trewe as stel,
The which I formed have, as ye may see,
In every part as hit best lyketh me,
Hit nedeth noght his shap yow to devyse,
He shal first chese and speken in his gyse.²

And after him, by order shul ye chese, ⁴⁰⁰
After your kinde, everich as yow lyketh,
And, as your hap is, shul ye winne or lese;
But which of yow that love most entryketh,³
God sende him hir that sorest for him syketh.⁴
And therewith-al the tercel gan she calle,
And seyde, 'My sone, the choys is to thee
falle.

But natheles, in this condicioun
Mot⁴ be the choys of everich that is here,
That she agree to his eleccioun, ⁴⁰⁹
Who-so he be that shulde been hir fere;⁵
This is our usage alwey, fro yeer to yere;
And who so may at this time have his grace,
In blisful tyme he com in-to this place.'

With hed enclyned and with ful humble chere
This royal tercel spak and taried nought;
'Unto my sovereign lady, and noght my fere,
I chese, and chese with wille and herte and
thought,

The formel on your hond so wel y-wrought,
Whos I am al and ever wol hir serve,
Do what hir list, to do me live or sterve. ⁴²⁰

Beseching hir of mercy and of grace,
As she that is my lady sovereigne;
Or let me dye present in this place.
For certes, long may I not live in peyne;
For in myn herte is corven⁶ every veyne;
Having reward⁷ [al] only to my trouthe,
My dere herte, have on my wo som route.

¹ the male of a bird of prey — perhaps so called because a third smaller than the female. ² way.
³ pesters. ⁴ must. ⁵ mate. ⁶ cut. ⁷ regard.

And if that I to hir be founde untrewé,
Disobeysaunt, or wilful negligent,
Avauntour,⁸ or in proces⁹ love a newe, ⁴³⁰
I pray to you this be my jugement,
That with these foules I be al to-rent,
That ilke day that ever she me finde
To hir untrewé, or in my gilte unkinde.

And sin that noon loveth hir so wel as I,
Al be she never of love me behette,¹⁰
Than oghte she be myn thorough hir mercy,
For other bond can I noon on hir knette.¹¹
For never, for ne wo, ne shal I lette¹² ⁴³⁹
To serven hir, how fer so that she wende;
Sey what yow list, my tale is at an ende.'

Right as the fresshe, rede rose newe
Ayen the somer-sonne coloured is,
Right so for shame al wexen gan the hewe
Of this formel, whan she herde al this;
She neyther answerde 'Wel,' ne seyde amis.
So sore abashed was she, til that Nature
Seyde, 'Doghter, drede yow noght, I yow
assure.'¹³

Another tercel egle spak anon,
Of lower kinde, and seyde, 'That shal not
be; ⁴⁵⁰

I love hir bet than ye do, by seynt John,
Or atte leste I love hir as wel as ye;
And longer have served hir, in my degree,
And if she shulde have loved for long loving,
To me allone had been the guerdoning.¹⁴

I dar eek seye, if she me finde fals,
Unkinde, jangler, or rebel any wyse,
Or jalous, do me hongen by the hals!
And but I bere me in hir servyse,
As well as that my wit can me suffyse, ⁴⁶⁰
Fro poynt to poynt, hir honour for to save,
Tak she my life, and al the good¹⁵ I have.'

The thridde tercel egle answerde tho,¹⁶
'Now, sirs, ye seen the litel leyser¹⁷ here;
For every foul cryeth out to been a-go
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere;
And eek Nature hir-self ne wol nought here,
For taryng here, noght half that I wolde seye;
And but I speke, I mot for sorwe deye.

Of long servyse avaunte I me no-thing, ⁴⁷⁰
But as possible is me to dye to-day
For wo, as he that hath ben languissching

⁸ boaster. ⁹ in time. ¹⁰ promised. ¹¹ knit. ¹² cense.
¹³ protect. ¹⁴ rewarding. ¹⁵ goods. ¹⁶ then. ¹⁷ leisure.

Thise twenty winter, and wel happen may
A man may serven bet and more to pay.¹
In half a yere, al-though hit were no more,
Than som man doth that hath served ful yore.

I ne say not this by² me, for I ne can
Do no servyse that may my lady plesse;
But I dar seyn, I am hir trewest man 479
As to my dome, and feynest wolde hir ese;
At shorte wordes, til that deth me sese,
I wol ben hires, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that herte may bethinke.³

Of al my lyf, sin that day I was born,
So gentil plee in love or other thing
Ne herde never no man me beforne,
Who[-so] that hadde leyser and cunning
For to reherse hir chere and hir speking;
And from the morwe gan this speche laste
Til downward drow the sonne wonder
faste. 490

The noyse of foules for to ben delivered
So loudre rong, 'Have doon and let us wende!⁴
That wel wende⁵ I the wode had al to-shiv-
ered.

'Come of!'⁴ they cryde, 'allas! ye wil us
shende!

When shal your cursed pleding have an
ende?

How shulde a juge eyther party leve,⁵
For yee or nay, with-outen any preve?

The goos, the cokkow, and the doke also
So cryden 'Kek, kek!' 'Kukkow!' 'Quek,
quek!' hye,

That thorgh myn eres the noyse wente tho.
The goos seyde, 'Al this nis not worth a
flye! 501

But I can shape hereof a remedye,
And I wol sey my verdict faire and swythe
For water-foul, who-so be wrooth or blythe.⁶

'And I for worm-foul,' seyde the fool kuk-
kow,

'For I wol, of myn owne auctorite,
For comune spede, take the charge now,
For to delivere us is gret charite.⁷

'Ye may abyde a whyle yet, parde!⁸
Seide the turtel, 'if hit be your wille 510
A wight may speke, him were as good be
stille.⁶

I am a seed-foul, oon the unworthieste,
That wot I wel, and litel of kunninge;
But bet is that a wightes tonge reste
Than entremeten him⁷ of such doinge
Of which he neyther rede can nor singe.
And who-so doth, ful foule himself acloyeth,⁸
For office uncommitted ofte anyoeth.⁹

Nature, which that alway had an ere
To murmur of the lewednes behinde, 520
With facound¹⁰ voys seide, 'Hold your
tonges there!

And I shal sone, I hope, a counseyl finde
You to delivere, and fro this noyse unbinde;
I juge, of every folk men shal oon calle
To seyn the verdict for you foules alle.¹¹

Assented were to this conclusioun
The briddes alle; and foules of ravyne
Han chosen first, by pleyen eleccioun,
The tercelet of the faucon, to diffyne 529
Al hir sentence,¹¹ and as him list, termynye;¹²
And to Nature him gonnen¹³ to presente,
And she accepteth him with glad entente.

The tercelet seide than in this manere:
'Ful hard were hit to preve hit by resoun
Who loveth best this gentil formel here;
For everich hath swich replicacioun¹⁴
That noon by skilles¹⁵ may be broght a-doun;
I can not seen that arguments avayle;
Than semeth hit ther moste be batayle.'

'Al redy!' quod¹⁶ these egles tercelles tho.
'Nay, sirs!' quod he, 'if that I dorste it
seye, 541

Ye doon me wrong, my tale is not y-do!
For sirs, ne taketh nocht a-gref,¹⁷ I preye,
It may nocht gon, as ye wolde, in this weye;
Oure is the voys that han the charge in
honde,

And to the juges dome ye moten stonde;

And therfor pees! I seye, as to my wit,
Me wolde thinke¹⁸ how that the worthieste
Of knighthode, and lengest hath used hit,¹⁹
Moste of estat, of blode the gentileste, 550
Were sittingest²⁰ for hir, if that hir leste;
And of these three she wot hir-self, I trowe,
Which that he be, for hit is light to knowe.'

⁷ meddle.

⁸ overburdens.

⁹ A proverb; cf. "Proffered service stinketh."

¹⁰ fluent, ready. ¹¹ their sentiments. ¹² determine.

¹³ proceeded. ¹⁴ repartee. ¹⁵ reasons. ¹⁶ quoth.

¹⁷ in bad part. ¹⁸ It would seem to me. ¹⁹ Who

has been longest a good knight. ²⁰ most suitable.

¹ please. ² about. ³ thought. ⁴ Hurry up. ⁵ believe.

⁶ if a man is to speak after your fashion, he might as well be silent.

The water-foules han her hedes leyd
 Togeder, and of short avysement,
 Whan everich had his large golee¹ seyde,
 They seyden sothly, al by oon assent,
 How that 'the goos, with hir facounde
 gent,²
 That so desyreth to pronounce our nede,
 Shal telle our tale,' and preyde 'God hir
 spede.'
 560

And for these water-foules tho began
 The goos to speke, and in hir cakelinge
 She seyde, 'Pees! now tak kepe³ every
 man,
 And herkeneth which a⁴ reson I shal
 bringe;
 My wit is sharp, I love no taryinge;
 I seye, I rede⁵ him, though he were my
 brother,
 But she wol love him, lat him love
 another!'

'Lo here! a parfit reson of a goos!'
 Quod the sperhawk; 'never mot she thee!⁶
 Lo, swich hit is to have a tonge loos! 570
 Now parde, fool, yet were hit bet for
 thee
 Have holde thy pees, than shewed thy
 nyceite!⁷
 Hit lyth not in his wit nor in his wille,
 But sooth is seyde, "a fool can noght be
 stille."

The laughter aroos of gentil foules alle,
 And right anon the seed-foul chosen
 hadde
 The turtel trewe, and gunne hir to hem
 calle,
 And preyden hir to seye the sothe sadde
 Of this matere, and asked what she radde;
 And she answerde, that pleylny hir en-
 tente 580
 She wolde shewe, and sothly what she mente.

'Nay, God forbede a lover shulde chaunge!'
 The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al
 reed;
 'Thogh that his lady ever-more be straunge,
 Yet let him serve hir ever, til he be deed;
 For sothe, I preyse noght the gooses reed;
 For thogh she deyed, I wolde none other
 make,
 I wol ben hires, til that the deth me take.'

¹ gobble, lit. mouthful. ² gentle eloquence. ³ pay
 heed. ⁴ what sort of. ⁵ advise. ⁶ thrive. ⁷ folly.

'Wel bourded!'⁸ quod the doke, 'by my
 hat!
 That men shulde alwey loven, causeles, 590
 Who can a reson finde or wit in that?
 Daunceth he mury that is mirtheles?
 Who shulde recche of that is reccheles?
 Ye, quek!' yit quod the doke, ful wel and
 faire,
 'There been mo sterres, God wot, than a
 pairel'

'Now fy, cherl!' quod the gentil tercelet,
 'Out of the dunghil com that word ful
 right,
 Thou canst noght see which thing is wel
 be-set:
 Thou farest by love as oules doon by light,
 The day hem blent,⁹ ful wel they see by
 night; 600
 Thy kind is of so lowe a wrechednesse,
 That what love is, thou canst nat see ne
 gesse.'

Tho gan the cuckow putte him forth in
 prees
 For foul that eteth worm, and seide blyve,¹⁰
 So I,' quod he, 'may have my make¹¹ in
 pees,
 I recche not how longe that ye stryve;
 Lat ech of hem be soleyn¹² al hir lyve,
 This is my reed, sin they may not acorde;
 This shorte lesson nedeth noght recorde.'¹³

'Ye! have the glotoun fild ynogh his
 paunche, 610
 Than are we well!' seyde the merlioun;
 'Thou mordrer of the heysugge¹⁴ on the
 braunche
 That broghte thee forth, thou rewthelees
 glotoun!
 Live thou soleyn,¹⁵ wormes corrupcioun!¹⁶
 For no fors is of lakke of thy nature;¹⁷
 Go, lewed be thou, whyl the world may
 dure!'¹⁸

'Now pees,' quod Nature, 'I comaunde
 here;
 For I have herd al your opinioun,
 And in effect yet be we never the nere;¹⁹
 But fynally, this is my conclusion, 620
 That she hir-self shal han the eleccioun

⁸ jested. ⁹ blindeth. ¹⁰ promptly. ¹¹ mate.
¹² lone. ¹³ to be put on record. ¹⁴ haysuck, hedge-
 sparrow. ¹⁵ solitary. ¹⁶ Because his diet was worms.
¹⁷ It would not matter if there were a dearth of such
 as thou. ¹⁸ endure. ¹⁹ nearer.

Of whom hir list, who-so be wrooth or blythe,
Him that she cheest,¹ he shal hir have as
swythe.²

For sith hit may not here discussed be
Who loveth hir best, as seide the tercelet,
Than wol I doon hir this favour, that she
Shal have right him on whom hir herte is set,
And he hir that his herte hath on hir
knet.

This juge I, Nature, for I may not lyȝ;
To noon estat I have non other yȝ.³ 630

But as for counseyl for to chese a make,
If hit were reson, certes, than wolde I
Counseyle yow the royal tercel take,
As seide the tercelet ful skilfully,
As for the gentilest and most worthy,
Which I have wroght so wel to my ples-
saunce;

That to yow oghte been a suffisaunce.⁴

With dredful⁵ vois the formel hir answerde,
'My rightful lady, goddesse of Nature,
Soth is that I am ever under your yerde,⁶
Lyk as is everiche other creature,⁶⁴¹
And moot be youres whyl my lyf may dure;
And therfor graunteth me my firste bone,
And myn entente I wol yow sey right sone.'

'I graunte it you,' quod she; and right
anoon

This formel egle spak in this degree,
'Almighty quene, unto this yeer be doon
I aske respit for to avysen me.
And after that to have my choys al free;
This al and som⁶ that I wolde speke and
seye; 650

Ye gete no more, al-though ye do me deye.

I wol noght serven Venus ne Cupyde
For sothe as yet, by no manere wey.'
'Now sin it may non other wyse betyde,'
Quod tho Nature, 'here is no more to sey;
Than wolde I that these foules were a-wey
Ech with his make, for taryng lenger
here'—

And seyde hem thus, as ye shul after here.

'To you speke I, ye tercelet,' quod Nature,
'Beth of good herte and serveth, alle
three; 660

A yeer is not so longe to endure,

And ech of yow peyne him, in his degree,
For to do wel; for, God wot, quit is she
Fro yow this yeer; what after so befallē,
This entremes⁷ is dressed for you alle.'

And whan this werk al broght was to an
ende,

To every foule Nature yaf his make
By even acorde, and on hir wey they wende.
A! lord! the blisse and joye that they
make! 669

For ech of hem gan other in winges take,
And with hir nekkes ech gan other winde,
Thanking alwey the noble goddesse of
kinde.

But first were chosen foules for to singe,
As yeer by yere was alwey hir usaunce
To singe a roundel at hir departinge,
To do Nature honour and plesaunce.
The note, I trowe, makid was in Fraunce;
The wordes were swich as ye may heer
finde,
The nexte vers, as I now have in minde.

Qui bien aime a tard oublie.⁸

'Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-
shake, 681
And driven away the longe nightes blake!

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte,
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake:
*Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake.*

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen whan they
wake,
*Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe, 690
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake.'*

And with the showing, whan hir song was
do,
That foules maden at her flight a-way,
I wook, and other bokes took me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
I hope, y-wis, to rede so som day
That I shal mete som thing for to fare
The bet; and thus to rede I nil not spare.

¹ chooseth. ² forthwith. ³ eye. ⁴ deferential.
⁵ rod, governance. ⁶ This is quite all.

⁷ intermission; between-course.
⁸ Who loves truly forgets late.

TROIUS AND CRISEYDE

BOOK I

1. THE double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his adventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of joye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for t'endyte
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!

2. To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in payne; 9
Help me, that am the sorful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
For wel sit¹ it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery fere,²
And, to a sorful tale, a sory chere.

3. For I, that god of Loves servaunts serve,
Ne dar to Love, for myn unlyknesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
So fer am I fro his help in derknesse;
But natheles, if this may doon gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause avayle, 20
Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!

4. But ye loveres that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevynesse
That ye han felt, and on the adversitee
Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
Han felt that Love dorste yow displese;
Or ye han wonne him with to greet an ese.

5. And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here, 30
That love hem bringe in hevene to solas;
And eek for me preyeth to God so dere,
That I have might to shewe, in som manere,
Swich payne and wo as Loves folk endure,
In Troilus unsely³ aventure.

¹ is becoming. ² companion. ³ hapless.

6. And biddeth eek for hem that been despayred

In love, that never nil recovered be,
And eek for hem that falsly been aplayred⁴
Thorough wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth God, for his benignitee, 40
To graunte hem sone out of this world to pace,
That been despayred out of Loves grace.

7. And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
That God hem graunte ay good perseve-
raunce,
And sende hem might hir ladies so to plesse,
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
To preye for hem that Loves servaunts be,
And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.

8. And for to have of hem compassioun 50
As though I were hir owene brother dere.
Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,
For now wol I gon streight to my matere,
In whiche he may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him er she deyde.

9. It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troye-wardes, and the citee longe
Assageden neigh ten yeer er they stente, 60
And, in diverse wyse and oon entente,
The ravissing to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris doon, they wroughten al hir payne.

10. Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was
Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answeere of his god, that highte thus,
Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus. 70

⁴ disparaged.

11. So whan this Calkas knew by caleu-
linge,

And eek by answeere of this Appollo,
That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe
Thorough which that Troye moste been for-
do,

He caste¹ anon out of the toun to go;
For wel wiste he, by sort,² that Troye sholde
Destroyed been, ye, wolde who-so nolde.³

12. For which, for to departen softly
Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,⁴
And to the Grekes ost ful prively⁵
He stal⁶ anon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Him deden bothe worship and servyse,
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In every peril which that is to drede.

13. The noyse up roos, whan it was first
aspyed,
Thorough al the toun, and generally was
spoken,
That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
With hem of Grece; and casten to ben
wroken⁶

On him that falsly hadde his feith so broken;
And seyden, he and al his kin at ones⁷
Ben worthy for to brennen, fel⁷ and bones.

14. Now hadde Calkas left, in this mes-
chaunce,
Al unwist⁸ of this false and wikked dede,
His daughter, which that was in gret pen-
aunce,

For of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
As she that niste what was best to rede;⁹
For bothe a widowe was she, and allone
Of any freend to whom she dorste hir mone.

15. Criseyde was this lady name a-right;
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee¹⁰⁰
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That down was sent in scorning of nature.

16. This lady, which that al-day herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun;¹¹⁰

With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.

17. Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,¹⁰
And that she was so fair a creature;
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anon,
And seyde, 'Lat your fadres tresoun goon
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your-self,
in joye,
Dwellet with us, whyl you good list, in
Troye.

18. And al th'onour that men may doon
yow have,¹²⁰
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shul han, and your body shal men save,
As fer as I may ought enquire or here.'
And she him thonked with ful humble
chere,
And offer wolde, and it hadde ben his wille,
And took hir leve, and hoom, and held hir
stille.

19. And in hir hous she abood with swich
meynee¹¹
As to hir honour nede was to holde;
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and bothe of yonge and
olde¹³⁰
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.
But whether that she children hadde or
noon,
I rede it nought; therefore I lete it goon.

20. The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte;
For som day boughten they of Troye it
derre,
And eft¹² the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune onlofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe.

21. But how this toun com to destruc-
cioun¹⁴¹
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle;
For it were here a long digressioun
Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.¹³
But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares,¹⁴ or in Dyte,¹⁵
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they
wryte.

¹ planned. ² divination. ³ in spite of those for or
against. ⁴ sage. ⁵ stole. ⁶ they planned to be
avenged. ⁷ skin. ⁸ unknowing. ⁹ to plan.

¹⁰ in distress. ¹¹ retinue. ¹² again. ¹³ delay,
bore, too long. ¹⁴ Dares Phrygius. ¹⁵ Dictys Cretensis.

22. But though that Grekes hem of Troye
shetten,¹

And hir citee bisegede al a-boute,
Hir olde usage wolde they not letten, ¹⁵⁰
As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute;
But aldermost in honoure, out of doute,
They hadde a relik high Palladion,
That was hir trist a-boven everichon.

23. And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Ver² the pryme,
And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde, ¹⁶⁰
Palladiones feste for to holde.

24. And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,
In general, ther wente many a wight,
To herkennen of Palladion the servyse;
And namely, so many a lusty knight,
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
Ful wel arrayed, bothe moste and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

25. Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habite blak; but nathelees, ¹⁷⁰
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,³
In beautee first so stooed she, makelees;⁴
Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
Nas never seyn thing to ben preyed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre

26. As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichon

That hir bihelden in hir blake wede;
And yet she stooed ful lowe and stille alloon,
Bihinden othere folk, in litel brede,⁵
And neigh the dore, ay under shames
drede, ¹⁸⁰

Simple of atyr, and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured loking and manere.

27. This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and
doun

In thilke large temple on every syde,
Biholding ay the ladyes of the toun,
Now here, now there, for no devocioun
Hadde he to noon, to reven him his reste,
But gan to preyse and lakken⁶ whom him
leste.

28. And in his walk ful fast he gan to
wayten⁷ ¹⁹⁰

If knight or squyer of his companye
Gan for to syke⁸ or lete his eyen bayten⁹
On any woman that he coude aspye;
He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus, 'God wot, she slepeth
softe

For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful
ofte!

29. 'I have herd told, pardieux, of your
livinge,

Ye lovers, and your lewede observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in winninge
Of love, and, in the keping, which dou-
taunces; ²⁰⁰

And whan your preye is lost, wo and pen-
aunces;

O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye;
Ther nis not oon can war by other be.'

30. And with that word he gan cast up the
browe,

Ascaunces,¹⁰ 'Lo! is this nought wysly
spoken?'

At which the god of love gan loken rowe¹¹
Right for despyt, and shoop for to ben
wroken;¹²

He kidde¹³ anon his bowe nas not broken;
For sodeynly he hit him at the fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.¹⁴ ²¹⁰

31. O blinde world! O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al th'effect contraire
Of surquidrye¹⁵ and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debo-
naire.

This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.
But al-day fayleth thing that foles wenden.

32. As proude Bayard¹⁶ ginneth for to
skippe

Out of the wey, so priketh him his corn,
Til he a lash have of the longe whippe, ²²⁰
Than thenketh he, 'Though I prauce al
biforn

First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.'

¹ shut up.

² the spring.

³ Alluding to Richard II's queen, Anne.

⁴ peerless.

⁵ space.

⁶ criticize.

⁷ take heed.

¹¹ cross.

¹³ showed.

¹⁵ over-confidence.

⁸ sigh.

¹² determined to wreak vengeance.

¹⁴ pluck as proud a bird.

¹⁶ a bay horse.

¹⁰ As if to say.

33. So ferde it by this fers and proude knight;

Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende no-thing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte sterve,¹
Yet with a look his herte wex a-ferre,²
That he, that now was most in pryde
above,

Wex sodeynly most subget un-to love. 230

34. For-thy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle;
For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde;
For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde.

35. That this be sooth, hath proved³ and doth yit;

For this trowe I ye knowen, alle or some, 240
Men reden not that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with love
y-nome;⁴

And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree;
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

36. And trowelich it sit wel to be so;
For alderwysest han ther-with ben plesed;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han been comforted most and esed;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed, 250
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

37. Now sith it may not goodly be with-
stonde,

And is a thing so vertuons in kinde,
Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde,
Sin as him-selven list, he may yow binde.
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde
Than that that brest;⁵ and therfor I yow
rede

To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

38. But for to tellen forth in special 260
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,
Of him thanke I my tale for to holde,
Bothe of his joye, and of his cares colde;
And al his werk, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I wil ther-to refere.⁶

¹ stir. ² afeared. ³ hath been proved.
⁴ taken. ⁵ breaketh. ⁶ return.

39. With-inne the temple he wente him
forth pleyinge,

This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady and now on that lokinge,
Wher-so she were of toun, or of with-
oute: 270

And up-on cas bifel, that thorough a route
His eye perced, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

40. And sodeynly he wex ther-with astoned,
And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty⁷ wyse:
'O mercy, God!' thoughte he, 'wher hastow
woned,'⁸

That art so fair and goodly to devyse?'
Ther-with his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
And softe sighed, lest men mighte him here,
And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge
chere. 280

41. She nas not with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seminge.
And eek the pure wyse of here meninge
Shewede wel,⁹ that men might in hir gesse
Honour, estat,¹⁰ and wommanly noblesse.

42. To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
Gan for to lyke hir mening and hir chere,
Which somdel deynous¹¹ was, for she leet
falle 290

Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
Ascaunces,¹² 'What! may I not stonden
here?'

And after that hir loking gan she lighte,¹³
That never thoughte him seen so good a
sighte.

43. And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken
So greet desir, and swich affeccioun,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun:
And though he erst hadde poured up and
down, 299

He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinke;
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke.

44. Lo, he that leet¹⁴ him-selven so kon-
ninge,
And scorned hem that loves peynes dryen,¹⁵
Was ful unwar that love hadde his dwellinge

⁷ discreet.

⁸ dwelt.

⁹ The very nature of her disposition was apparent.

¹⁰ rank.

¹¹ diadainful.

¹² As much as to say.

¹³ make cheerful.

¹⁴ considered.

¹⁵ endure.

With-inne the subtille stremes of hir yēn;
That soodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte;
Blessed be love, that thus can folk con-
verte!

45. She, this in blak, lykinge to Troilus
Over alle thing, he stood for to biholde; ³¹⁰
Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne worde tolde;
But from a-fer, his maner for to holde,
On other thing his look som-tyme he caste,
And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.

46. And after this, not fulliche al a-
whaped,¹
Out of the temple al esiliche he wente,
Repenting him that he hadde ever y-japed
Of loves folk, lest fully the descente
Of scorn fille on him-self; but, what he
mente, ³²⁰
Lest it were wist on any maner syde,²
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.

47. Whan he was fro the temple thus de-
parted,
He streight anon un-to his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and
thurgh-darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth;
And al his chere and speche also he born-
eth;³
And ay, of loves servants every whyle,
Him-self to wrye,⁴ at hem he gan to smyle.

48. And seyde, 'Lord, so ye live al in lest,⁵
Ye loveres! for the conningest of yow, ³³¹
That serveth most ententifich and best,
Him tit⁶ as often harm ther-of as prow;⁷
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, God wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good
servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!

49. In noun-certein⁸ ben alle your observ-
aunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be; ³³⁸
Ne no-thing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth your lay,⁹ and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worste, as mote I thee;
But, tolde I yow the worste poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

50. But tak this: that ye loveres ofte es-
chuwe
Or elles doon of good entencioun,
Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,¹⁰
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn¹¹
anon:
Lord! wel is him that may be of yow
oon! ³⁵⁰

51. But for al this, whan that he say¹² his
tyme,
He held his pees, non other bote him
gayned;¹³
For love began his fetheres so to lyme,¹⁴
That wel unneth¹⁵ un-to his folk he feyned
That othere besye nedes him destrayned;
For wo was him, that what to doon he
niste,
But bad his folk to goon wher that hem
liste.

52. And whan that he in chaumbre was al-
lone,
He doun up-on his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to
grone, ³⁶⁰
And thoughte ay on hir so, with-uten
lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a¹⁶ temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe ayve.

53. Thus gan he make a mirour of his
minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure;
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he hide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in
grace, ³⁷⁰
Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace:

54. Imagininge that travaille nor grame¹⁷
Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she; ne him for his desir no shame,¹⁸
Al were it wist, but in prys and up-born¹⁹
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn;
Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

¹⁰ occasion.

¹¹ rebuff.

¹² saw.

¹³ no other remedy profited him. ¹⁴ As with bird-lime.

¹⁵ with great difficulty.

¹⁶ in the.

¹⁷ pain.

¹⁸ Supply "come upon" (with object *him*).

¹⁹ Supply "would he be."

¹ bewildered. ² anyhow, anywhere. ³ burnishes,

brightens. ⁴ conceal.

⁵ pleasure.

⁶ betideth.

⁷ advantage. ⁸ uncertainty. ⁹ faith, creed.

55. Thus took he purpos loves craft to
suwe,¹

And thoughte he wolde werken prively, ³⁸⁰
First, to hyden his desir in muwe²
From every wight y-born, al-outrely,
But he mighte ought recovered be therby;
Remembring him, that love to wyde y-
blowe
Yelt³ bittre fruyt, though swete seed be
sowe.

56. And over al this, yet muchel more he
thoughte

What for to speke, and what to holden
inne,

And what to arten⁴ hir to love he soughte,
And on a song anon-right to biginne, ³⁸⁹
And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne;
For with good hope he gan fully assente
Criseyde for to love, and nought repente.

57. And of his song nought only the sen-
tence,

As writ myn autour called Lollius,⁵
But pleylny, save our tonges difference,
I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
Seyde in his song, lo! every word right
thus
As I shal seyn; and who-so list it here,
Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

CANTUS TROILI

58. 'If no love is, O God, what fele I so? ⁴⁰⁰
And if love is, what thing and whiche is
he?

If love be good, from whennes comth my
wo?

If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
When every torment and adversitee
That cometh of him, may to me savory
thinke;
For ay thurste I, the more that I it drinke.

59. And if that at myn owene lust I
brenne,
Fro whennes cometh my wailing and my
pleynte?

If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte. ⁴¹⁰
O quike deeth! O swete harm so queynte!

¹ follow.

² secret; literally, "hawk's moulting place."

³ Yieldeth.

⁴ incite.

⁵ A puzzling name—here for Petrarch, whose 88th sonnet follows; elsewhere for Boccaccio. See Skeat's note.

How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
But-if that I consente that it be?

60. And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, y-wis; thus possed⁶ to and
fro,

Al sterelees⁷ with-inne a boot am I
A-mid the see, by-twixen windes two,
That in contrarie stonden ever-mo.
Allas! what is this wonder maladye?
For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I dye.' ⁴²⁰

61. And to the god of love thus seyde he
With pitous voys, 'O lord, now youre is
My spirit, which that oughte youre be.
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought
to this;

But whether goddesse or womman, y-wis,
She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve;
But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve.

62. Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place un-to your vertu digne;
Wherefore, lord, if my servyse or I ⁴³⁰
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne;
For myn estat royal here I resigne
In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.'

63. In him ne deyned sparen blood royal
The fyr of love, wher-fro God me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
His vertu or his excellent prowesse;
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brend him so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sixty tyme a day he lost his hewe. ⁴⁴¹

64. So muche, day by day, his owene
thought,

For lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought;
For-thy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese,
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese;
For ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the neer⁸ he was, the more he
brende.

65. For ay the neer the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this, ⁴⁵¹
By night or day, for wysdom or folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes yð,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever was Eleyne or Polixene.

⁶ pushed, tossed. ⁷ rudderless. ⁸ higher.

66. Eek of the day ther passed nought an
houre

That to him-self a thousand tyme he
seyde,

‘Good goodly, to whom serve I and la-
boure,

As I best can, now wolde God, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde! ⁴⁶⁰
My dere herte, allas! myn hele ¹ and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe.’

67. Alle othere dredes weren from him
fledde,

Bothe of th’assege and his savacioun;
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes ²
bredde

But arguments to this conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure;
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his
cure!

68. The sharpe shoures felle ³ of armes
preve,

That Ector or his othere bretheren didnen, ⁴⁷⁰
Ne made him only ther-fore ones meve;
And yet was he, wher-so men wente or
riden,

Founde on the best, and lengest tyme
abiden

Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.

69. But for non hate he to the Grekes
hadde,

Ne also for the rescous ⁴ of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde, ⁵
But only, lo, for this conclusioun, ⁴⁸⁰
To lyken ⁶ hir the bet for his renoun;
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him
dredde.

70. And fro this forth tho refte him love
his sleep,

And made his mete his foo; and eek his
sorwe

Gan multiplye, that, who-so toke keep,
It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and
morwe;

Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe
Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende
That the hote fyr of love him brende; ⁴⁹⁰

¹ health. ² younglings (lit. fawns). ³ An adjective.
⁴ rescue. ⁵ rage. ⁶ please.

71. And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde
amis;

But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye;
But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
Ne semed it [as] that she of him roughte,
Nor of his payne, or what-so-ever he
thoughte.

72. But than fel to this Troilus such
wo

That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his
drede

Was this, that she som wight had loved
so,

That never of him she wolde have taken
hede;

For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte
blede.

Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

73. But whanne he hadde a space fro his
care,

Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan to pleyne;
He sayde, ‘O fool, now art thou in the
snare,

That whilom japedest at loves payne;
Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene
cheyne;

Thou were ay wont eche lovere repre-
hende ⁵¹⁰

Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat
defende.

74. What wole now every lover seyn of
thee,

If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
Laughen in scorn, and seyn, “Lo, ther
goth he,

That is the man of so gret sapience,
That held us lovers leest in reverence!

Now, thought be God, he may goon in the
daunce

Of hem that Love list feebly for to avaunce!

75. But, O thou woful Troilus, God wolde,
Sin thou most loven thurgh thy destinee, ⁵²⁰
That thou beset were on swich oon that
sholde

Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee:

But al so cold in love, towards thee,

Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone.”

76. God wolde I were aryved in the port
Of deeth, to which my sorwe wil me lede !
A, lord, to me it were a greet comfort;
Then were I quit of languissching in drede.
For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede¹
I shal bi-japed been a thousand tyme 531
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

77. But now help God, and ye, swete, for
whom
I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never wight so faste !
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,
More than my-self wol love yow to my
laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me,
swete,
Though never more thing ye me bi-hete !'²

78. This wordes and ful manye an-other to
He spak, and called ever in his com-
pleynte 541
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynthe.³
Al was for nought, she herde nought his
pleynte;
And whan that he bithoughte on that folye,
A thousand fold his wo gan multiplie.

79. Bi-wayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And sey his freend in swich distresse and
care: 550
•Allas !' quod he, 'who causeth al this
fare ?'⁴
O mercy, God ! what unhap may this mene ?
Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene ?

80. Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy siune and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun ?⁵
God save hem that bi-seged han our toun,
And so can leye our jolytee on presse,⁶
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse !' 560

81. These wordes seyde he for the nones
alle,⁷
That with swich thing he mighte him
angry maken,
And with an angre don his sorwe falle,

¹ abroad. ² promise. ³ drowned. ⁴ ado.

⁵ horror of sin through fear of punishment.

⁶ make us put it away—as in a clothes-press.

⁷ merely for the nonce.

As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wiste, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

82. 'What cas,' quod Troilus, 'or what
aventure

Hath gyded thee to see my languissching,
That am refus of every creature ? 570
But for the love of God, at my preyinge,
Go henne⁸ a-way, for certes, my deyinge
Wol thee disese,⁹ and I mot nedes deye;
Ther-for go wey, ther is no more to seye.

83. But if thou wene I be thus syk for
drede,

It is not so, and ther-for scorne nought;
Ther is a-nother thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han y-
wrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and
thought.

But though that I now telle thee it ne
leste,¹⁰ 580
Be thou nought wrooth, I hyde it for the
beste.

84. This Pandare, that neigh malt¹¹ for wo
and routhe,

Ful often seyde, 'Allas ! what may this be ?
Now freend,' quod he, 'if ever love or
trouthe

Hath been, or is, bi-twixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care;
Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare ?

85. I wole parten¹² with thee al thy payne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort, 590
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,
To entreparten¹² wo, as glad desport.
I have, and shal, for¹³ trewe or fals report,
In wrong and right y-loved thee al my lyve;
Hyd not thy wo from me, but telle it blyve.¹⁴

86. Then gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus, 'God leve¹⁵ it be my
beste

To telle it thee; for, sith it may thee lyke,
Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte
breste; 599

And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.

⁸ hence. ⁹ make uncomfortable. ¹⁰ do not care
to tell it thee. ¹¹ melted. ¹² share. ¹³ in spite
of. ¹⁴ quickly. ¹⁵ grant.

But lest thow deme I truste not to thee,
Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with
me.

87. Love, a-yeins the which who-so defendeth

Him-selven most, him alder-lest¹ awayleth,
With desespere so sorwfully me offendeth,
That streight un-to the deeth myn herte
sayleth.

Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,
That to ben slayn it were a gretter joye
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

88. Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,

That I have seyde, for now wostow my
wo;

And for the love of God, my colde care
So hyd it wel, I telle it never to mo;
For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
If it were wist; but be thou in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknowe of my distresse.²

89. 'How hastow thus unkindely and longe
Hid this fro me, thou fool?' quod Pandarus;

'Paraunter thou might after swich oon
longe,

That myn avys anon may helpen us.'⁶²⁰
'This were a wonder thing,' quod Troilus,
'Thou coudest never in love thy-selven
wisse;³

How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?'

90. 'Ye, Troilus, now herke,' quod Pandare,

'Though I be nyce;⁴ it happeth ofte so,
That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare.⁶
By good counseyl can kepe his freend ther-
fro.

I have my-self eek seyn a blind man go
Ther-as he fel that coude loke wyde;
A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde.⁶³⁰

91. A whetston is no kerving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis.
And ther thow woost that I have ought
miswent,

Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thee
scole is;

Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis.

¹ least of all. ² my distress being unknown.
³ guide. ⁴ foolish. ⁵ that passion causes to fare ill.

If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared;⁶
By his contrarie is every thing declared.

92. For how might ever sweetnesse have
be knowe

To him that never tasted bitternesse?

Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,⁶⁴⁰
That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthi-
nesse,

Ech set by other, more for other semeth;
As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.

93. Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,⁷
I, that have in love so ofte assayed

Grevaunces, oughte conne,⁸ and wel the
more

Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed.⁹

Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,¹⁰

Though I desyre with thee for to bere⁶⁵⁰
Thyn hevycharge;¹¹ it shal the lasse dere.¹²

94. I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,

Which that y-cleped was Oenone,

Wroot in a compleynt of hir hevinesse:

Ye sey the lettre¹³ that she wroot, y gesse?'

'Nay, never yet, y-wis,' quod Troilus.

'Now,' quod Pandare, 'herkne; it was
thus. —

95. "Phebus, that first fond art of medi-
cyne,"

Quod she, "and coude in every wightes
care⁶⁶⁰

Remede and reed,¹⁴ by herbes he knew
fyne,¹⁵

Yet to him-self his conninge was ful bare;

For love hadde him so bounden in a snare,

Al for the daughter of the kinge Admete,

That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete."¹⁶

96. Right so fare I, unhappily for me;

I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore;

And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,

And not my-self; repreve me no more.

I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore⁶⁷⁰

As doth an hawk that listeth for to pleye,

But to thyn help yet somewhat can I seye.

97. And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the payne,¹⁷

⁶ spent. ⁷ one lesson. ⁸ to know. ⁹ dismayed.

¹⁰ pleased. ¹¹ load. ¹² hurt. ¹³ See Ovid,

Heroides, v. ¹⁴ remedy and counsel. ¹⁵ An adjective.

¹⁶ amend. ¹⁷ though I had to die by torture.

That I shal never-mo discoveren¹ thee;
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat² restreyne³.
Thee fro thy love, though that it were
Eleyne,

That is thy brotheres wyf, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.

98. Therefore, as freend fullich in me as-
sure,⁸ 680

And tel me plat⁴ what is thyn enchesoun,⁶
And final cause of wo that ye endure;
For douteth no-thing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun,
To speke as now, for no wight may bireve
A man to love, til that him list to leve.

99. And witeth wel, that bothe two ben
vyces,—

Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve;⁶
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,
For for to trusten sum wight is a preve 690
Of trouthe, and for-ty wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conceyte, and do thee som wight
triste,⁷

Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.

100. The wyse seyth, “Wo him that is
alone,

For, and he falle, he hath noon help to
ryse;”

And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone;
For this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene. 700

101. Lat be thy weping and thy drerinesse,
And lat us lissen⁸ wo with other speche;
So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.

Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche⁹
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
And listen¹⁰ nought to seche hem other
cure

102. Men seyn, “To wrecche is consolacioun
To have an-other felawe in his payne;”

That oughte wel ben our opinioun, 710
For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why ther is no space!

¹ disclose. ² care not to. ³ trust. ⁴ downright.
⁵ occasion. ⁶ to believe. ⁷ cause thee to trust
some one. ⁸ alleviate. ⁹ augment, eke out.

¹⁰ desire.

103. If God wole thou art not agast of me,
Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
Thow wost thy-self whom that I love,
pardee,

As I best can, gon sithen longe whyle.¹¹
And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
And sith I am he that thou tristest
most, 720

Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.⁹

104. Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
But longe he lay as stille as he ded were;
And after this with sykinge he abreyde,¹²
And to Pandarus voys he lent his ere,
And up his eyen caste-he, that in fere
Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He sholde falle, or elles sone deye:

105. And cryde ‘A-wake!’ ful wonderly and
sharpe;

‘What? slombrestow as in a lytargye? 730
Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
That hereth soun, whan men the strenges
plye,

But in his minde of that no melodye
May sinken, him to glade, for that he
So dul is of his bestialtee?’

106. And with that Pandare of his wordes
stente;¹³

But Troilus yet him no word answerde,
For-why to telle nas not his entente
To never no man, for whom that he so
ferde. 739

For it is seyde, ‘Man maketh ofte a yerde¹⁴
With which the maker is him-self y-beten
In sondry maner,’ as thise wyse treten,

107. And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
That toucheth love that oughte be secree;
For of him-self it wolde y-nough out-
springe,

But-if that it the bet governed be.
Eek som-tyme it is craft to seme flee
Fro thing which in effect men hunte faste;
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

108. But nathelees, whan he had herd him
crye 750

‘Awake!’ he gan to syke wonder sore,
And seyde, ‘Freend, though that I stille
lye,

I am not deef; now pees, and cry no more;
For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore;

¹¹ since long ago. ¹² started. ¹³ ceased. ¹⁴ rod.

But suffre me my mischef to biwayle,
For thy proverbes may me nought ayvale.

109. Nor other cure canstow noon for me.
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye;
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee
preye.⁷⁶⁰
'No,' quod tho Pandarus, 'therefore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

110. Now knowe I that ther reson in thee
fayleth.
But tel me, if I wiste what she were
For whom that thee al this misaunter¹
ayleth,
Dorstestow² that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for
fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som
routhe?³
'Why, nay,' quod he, 'by God and by my
trouthe!'⁷⁷⁰

111. 'What? not as bisily,' quod Pandarus,
'As though myn owene lyf lay on this
nede?'
'No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus.
'And why?'—'For that thou sholdest
never spede.'
'Wostow that wel?'—'Ye, that is out of
drede,'
Quod Troilus, 'for al that ever ye conne,
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be
wonne.'

112. Quod Pandarus, 'Allas! what may
this be,
That thou despayred art thus causelees?
What? liveth not thy lady? *benedicite!*⁷⁸⁰
How wostow so that thou art gracelees?
Swich yvel is not alwey botelees.³
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.

113. I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius,⁴ in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren ever-mo
That highte volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun⁷⁹⁰
That of thy wo is no curacioun.

¹ misadventure.² Wouldst thou dare.³ without remedy.⁴ Tityus.

114. But ones niltow, for thy coward
herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulness,
For wantrust,⁵ tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisnesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyst as he that list of no-thing
recche.
What womman coude love swich a
wrecche?

115. What may she demen other of thy
deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is, 800
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
For Grekes han biseged us, y-wis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of
this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at
ones,
'The wrecche is deed, the devel have his
bones!'

116. Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye
and knele;
But, love a woman that she woot it
nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is un-
sought.
What! many a man hath love ful dere
y-bought⁸¹⁰
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,
That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.

117. What? shulde he therfor fallen in
despayr,
Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,⁶
Or sleen him-self, al be his lady fayr?
Nay, nay, but ever in oon⁷ be fresh and
grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
A thousand-fold more than he can deserve.'

118. And of that word took hede Troilus,
And thoughte anon what folye he was
inne,⁸²¹
And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
That for to sleen him-self mighte he not
winne,
But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte;⁸
For of his wo, God woot, she knew ful lyte.

⁵ distrust. ⁶ vexation. ⁷ continually. ⁸ blame.

119. And with that thought he gan ful
sore syke,

And seyde, 'Allas! what is me best to do?'
To whom Pandare answerde, 'If thee lyke,
The best is that thou telle me thy wo; 830
And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
I be thy bote¹ or that it be ful longe,
To peces do me drawe, and sithen hongel'

120. 'Ye, so thou seyst,' quod Troilus tho,
'allas!

But, God wot, it is not the rather so;
Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo,
Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde;
For, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and
bonde.' 840

121. Quod Pandarus, 'Than blamestow
Fortune

For thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst² I see;
Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune
To every maner wight in som degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!
That, as hir joyes moten over-goon,
So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.

122. For if hir wheel stinte any-thing to
torne,

Than cessed she Fortune anon to be:
Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may so-
jorne, 850

What wostow if hir mutabilitee
Right as thy-selven list, wol doon by thee,
Or that she be not fer fro thyn helping?
Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

123. And therfor wostow what I thee
beseche?

Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde;
For who-so list have helping of his leche,
To him bihoveth first unwrye³ his wounde.
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe, 860
By my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.

124. Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is
Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede;
Knowe ich howght? For my love, tel me
this;

Than wolde I hopen rather⁴ for to spede.
The gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,

¹ That I am your remedy.

³ uncover.

² for the first time.

⁴ sooner.

For he was hit, and wex al reed for shame;
'A ha!' quod Pandare, 'here biginneth
game!'

125. And with that word he gan him for to
shake,

And seyde, 'Theef, thou shalt hir name
telle.' 870

But tho gan sely⁵ Troilus for to quake
As though mensholde han lad him in-to helle,
And seyde, 'Allas! of al my wo the welle,
Than is my swete fo called Criseyde!
And wel nigh with the word for fere he
deyde.

126. And whan that Pandare herde hir
name nevene,⁶

Lord, he was glad, and seyde, 'Freend so dere,
Now fare a-right, for Joves name in hevене,
Love hath biset⁷ thee wel, be of good chere;
For of good name and wysdom and
manere 880

She hath y-nough, and eek of gentillesse.
If she be fayr, thow wost thy-self, I gesse.

127. Ne I never saw a more bounteous
Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche
A freendlier, ne a more gracious
For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to doon; and al this bet to eche,⁸
In honour, to as fer as she may streche,⁹
A kinges herte semeth by hires a wrecche.

128. And for-thy¹⁰ loke of good comfort
thou be; 890

For certainly, the firste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeynè,¹¹
A man to have pees with him-self, y-wis;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To loven wel, and in a worthy place;
Thee oughte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

129. And also think, and ther-with glade
thee,

That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is som pitee
Amonges alle thise othere in general; 900
And for-thy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name;
For vertue streccheth not him-self to
shame.¹²

⁵ poor.

⁶ named.

⁷ bestowed.

⁸ the more to enhance. ⁹ within her proper sphere.

¹⁰ therefore.

¹¹ regulated.

¹² Virtue goes not to the extent of shaming virtue;
or, virtue does nothing shameful.

130. But wel is me that ever I was born,
That thou biset art in so good a place;
For by my trouthe, in love I dorste have
sworn,
Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a
grace;
And wostow why? For thou were wont to
chace
At love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
"Seynt Idiot, lord of these foles alle." 910

131. How often hastow maad thy nyce
japes,¹
And seyde, that loves servants everichone
Of nycetee beu verray Goddes apes;
And some wolde monche² hir mete alone,
Ligging a-bedde, and make hem for to
grone;
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blanchete
fevere,³
And preydest God he sholde never kevere!⁴

132. And some of hem toke on hem, for
the colde,
More than y-nough,⁵ so seydestow ful ofte;
And some han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slepen
softe; 921
And thus they wolde han brought himself
a-lofte,⁶
And natheless were under at the laste;
Thus seydestow, and japedest ful faste.

133. Yet seydestow, that, for the more
part,
These loveres wolden speke in general,⁷
And thoughten that it was a siker art,
For fayling,⁸ for to assayen over-al.⁹
Now may I jape of thee, if that I shal!
But natheless, though that I sholde deye, 930
That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I
seye.

134. Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of
love,
"Thy grace, lord! for now I me repente
If I mis-spak, for now my-self I love:"
Thus sey with al thyn herte in good en-
tente.⁹
Quod Troilus, 'A! lord! I me consente,

¹ foolish jests. ² munch.

³ Jooose — a white fever. ⁴ recover.

⁵ Made over-much pretense of being afflicted by the
lady's coldness.

⁶ advanced themselves. ⁷ in generalities.

⁸ A sure method to prevent failure. ⁹ everywhere.

And pray to thee my japes thou foryive,
And I shal never-more whyl I live.'

135. 'Thow seyst wel,' quod Pandare, 'and
now I hope
That thou the goddes wraththe hast al
apeded; 940
And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
And seyde swich thing wher-with thy god is
plesed,
Now wolde never God but thou were esed;
And think wel, she of whom rist¹⁰ al thy wo
Here-after may thy comfort been al-so.

136. For thilke ground, that bereth the
weddes wikke,
Bereth eek these holsum herbes, as ful ofte
Next the foule netle, rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth swote and smothe and
softe;
And next the valey is the hill a-lofte; 950
And next the derke night the glade morwe;
And also joye is next the fyn¹¹ of sorwe.

137. Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,¹²
And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,¹³
Or elles al our labour is on ydel;
He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde;
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.
Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.

138. But he that parted is in every place 960
Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
What wonder is, though swich oon have no
grace?
Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
As plannte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
No wonder is though it may never thryve.

139. And sith that god of love hath thee
bistowed
In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thy-self, for any hevynesse, 970
Hope alwey wel; for, but-if drerynesse
Or over-haste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende.

140. And wostow why I am the lasse a-
fered
Of this matere with my nece trete? ¹⁴

¹⁰ rises.

¹¹ end.

¹² temperate be thy bridle.

¹³ accommodate thyself to the occasion. ¹⁴ to treat.

For this have I herd seyde of wyse y-lered,¹
 "Was never man ne woman yet bigete
 That was unapt to suffren loves hete
 Celestial, or elles love of kinde;"
 For-thy som grace I hope in hir to finde. 980

141. And for to speke of hir in special,
 Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
 It sit² hir nought to be celestial
 As yet, though that hir liste bothe and
 couthe;

But trewely, it sete³ hire wel right nouthe⁴
 A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
 And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

142. Wherefore I am, and wol be, ay redy
 To payne me to do yow this servyse;
 For bothe yow to plesse thus hope I 990
 Her-afterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
 And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a
 wyse,

That no man shal the wyser of it be;
 And so we may be gladed alle three.

143. And, by my trouthe, I have right now
 of thee

A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
 And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
 I thinke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
 Hath the converted out of wikkednesse, 999
 That thou shalt be the beste post,⁵ I leve,
 Of al his lay,⁶ and most his foos to-greve.⁷

144. Ensample why, see now these wyse
 clerkes,

That erren aldermost a-yein a lawe,
 And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
 Thorugh grace of God, that list hem to him
 drawe,

Than arn they folk that han most God in
 awe,

And strengest-feythed been, I understonde,
 And conne an errour alder-best withstonde.⁸

145. Whan Troilus had herd Pandare as-
 sented

To been his help in loving of Criseyde, 1010
 Wex of his wo, as who seyth,⁹ untormented;
 But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
 With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde
 'Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
 Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

146. But, dere frend, how shal myn wo
 ben lesse

Til this be doon? And goode, eek tel me
 this,

How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
 Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wis,
 Or nil not here or trowen how it is. 1020

Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
 Of thee, hir eem,⁹ she nil no swich thing
 here.⁷

147. Quod Pandarus, 'Thou hast a ful gret
 care

Lest that the cherl may falle out of the
 mone!

Why, lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare!¹⁰
 Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!¹¹
 For Goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,¹²
 So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.¹³ —
 'Why, freend,' quod he, 'now do right as
 thee leste.

148. But herke, Pandare, o word, for I
 nolde 1030

That thou in me wendest so greet folye,
 That to my lady I desiren sholde
 That toucheth harm or any vileny;
 For dredelees, me were lever dye
 Than she of me ought elles understode
 But that that mighte sounen¹⁴ in-to gode.¹⁵

149. Tho lough¹⁴ this Pandare, and anoon
 answerde,

'And I thy borw?¹⁵ Fy! no wight dooth
 but so;

I roughthe¹⁶ nought though that she stode
 and herde 1039

How that thou seyst; but fare-wel, I wol go.
 A-dieu! be glad! God spede us bothe two!
 Yif me this labour and this businesse,
 And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.¹⁷

150. Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to
 falle,

And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
 And seyde, 'Now, fy on the Grekes alle!
 Yet, pardee, God shal helpe us at the laste;
 And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
 And God to-forn,¹⁷ lo, som of hem shal
 smerte;

And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me
 asterte!¹⁸ 1050

¹ learned ones. ² becometh. ³ would become.
⁴ now. ⁵ pillar. ⁶ religion. ⁷ tend.
⁸ grieve excessively. ⁹ as it were. ¹⁰ foolish fuss. ¹¹ mind
 your own business. ¹² ask a favor of you. ¹³ should reck.
¹⁴ laughed. ¹⁵ backer, security. ¹⁶ before God. ¹⁷ I repent that this boast escaped me.

151. Now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou
art al!

My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn honde I
leye;

Help now,' quod he. 'Yis, by my trouthe,
I shal.'

'God yelde¹ thee, freend, and this in special,'
Quod Troilus, 'that thou me recomaunde
To hir that to the deeth me may com-
aunde.'

152. This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere,
'Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank de-
serve; 1060

Have here my trouthe, and that thou shalt
wel here.'—

And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir beseche of
grace,

And finde a tyme ther-to, and a place.

153. For every wight that hath an hous to
founde

Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel² hond, but he wol byde a
stounde,³

And sende his hertes lyne out fro with-inne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.

¹ reward.

² rash.

³ time.

Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte, 1070
And caste⁴ his werk ful wysly, or⁵ he
wroughte.

154. But Troilus lay tho no lenger down,
But up anon up-on his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;
Wo was that Greek that with him mette
that day.

And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

155. For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
The gentileste, and eek the moste free, 1080
The thriftieste⁶ and oon the beste knight,
That in his tyme was, or mighte be.
Dede were his japes and his crueltee,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.

156. Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
Y-lissed⁷ wel, but heled no del more:
And, as an esy pacient, the lore 1090
Abit⁸ of him that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus.

⁴ planned.

⁵ before.

⁶ most successful.

⁷ Relieved.

⁸ Abideth.

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

PROLOGUE A

The prologe of ix. goode Wimmen.

A THOUSAND sythes¹ have I herd men
telle,
That ther is joye in heven, and peyne in
helle;
And I acorde wel that hit be so;
But natheles, this wot I wel also,
That ther nis noon that dwelleth in this
contree,
That either hath in helle or heven y-be,
Ne may of hit non other weyes witen,²
But as he hath herd seyde, or founde hit
written;
For by assay ther may no man hit preve.
But Goddes forbode,³ but mens shulde leve⁴ 10
Wel more thing then men han seen with yē!⁵
Men shal nat wenen every-thing a lyē
For that he seigh it nat of yore ago.
God wot, a thing is never the lesse so
Thogh every wight he may hit nat y-see.
Bernard the monk⁶ ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than mote we to bokes that we finde,
Through which that olde thinges been in
minde,
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Yeven credence, in every skilful⁷ wyse, 20
And trowen on these olde aproved stories
Of holinesse, of regnes,⁸ of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersinges.
And if that olde bokes were a-weye,
Y-loren were of remembraunce the keye.
Wel oghte us than on olde bokes leve,
Ther-as ther is non other assay by preve.⁹
And, as for me, though that my wit be
lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte, 30
And in myn herte have hem in reverence;
And to hem yeve swich lust and swich cre-
dence,
That ther is wel unethe game noon¹⁰
That from my bokes make me to goon,

¹ times. ² know. ³ God's prohibition — i.e. God
forbid! ⁴ believe. ⁵ eye. ⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux.
⁷ reasonable. ⁸ empires. ⁹ testing by experiment.
¹⁰ scarcely any game.

But hit be other up-on the haly-day,
Or elles in the joly tyme of May;
Whan that I here the smale foules singe,
And that the floures ginne for to springe,
Farwel my studie, as lasting that sesoun!
Now have I therto this condicioun¹¹ 40
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte and
rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth¹² me no day
That I naim up, and walking in the mede
To seen these floures agein the sonne sprede,
Whan it up-riseth by the morwe shene, 49
The longe day, thus walking in the grene.
And whan the sonne giuneth for to weste,
Than closeth hit, and draweth hit to reste,
So sore hit is afered of the night,
Til on the morwe, that hit is dayes light.
This dayesye, of alle floures flour,
Fulfilde of vertu and of alle honour,
And ever y-lyke fair and fresh of hewe,
As wel in winter as in somer newe,
Fain wolde I preisen, if I coude aright;
But wo is me, hit lyth nat in my might! 60
For wel I wot, that folk han her-beform
Of making ropen,¹³ and lad a-wey the corn;
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere
Of any goodly word that they han left.
And, if hit happe me rehersen eft
That they han in her fresshe souges sayd,
I hope that they wil nat ben evel apayd,¹⁴
Sith hit is seid in forthering and honour
Of hem that either serven leef or flour.¹⁵ 70
For trusteth wel, I ne have nat undertake
As of the leef, ageyn the flour, to make;¹⁶
Ne of the flour to make, ageyn the leef,
No more than of the corn ageyn the sheef.
For, as to me, is leefor noon ne lother;
I am with-holde¹⁷ yit with never nother.

¹¹ peculiarity.

¹² dawns.

¹³ Reaped the poetic field; an allusion to the French
"Marguerite" poets.

¹⁴ pleased.

¹⁵ Apparently poets sided in playful allegory with
one or the other. ¹⁶ compose poetry. ¹⁷ retained.

I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
That nis nothing the entent of my labour.
For this werk is al of another tunne,¹
Of olde story, er swich stryf was begunne. &
But wherfor that I spak, to yeve credence

To bokes olde and doon hem reverence,
Is for men shulde autoritees beleve,
Ther as ther lyth non other assay by preve.
For myn entent is, or I fro yow fare,
The naked text in English to declare
Of many a story, or elles of many a gest,
As autours seyn; leveth hem if yow leste!
Whan passed was almost the month of May,

And I had romed, al the someres day, ⁹⁰
The grene medew, of which that I yow tolde,

Upon the fresshe daysy to beholde,
And that the sounne out of the south gan weste,

And closed was the flour and goon to reste
For derknesse of the night, of which she dredde,

Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde;
And, in a litel erber² that I have,
Y-benched³ newe with turves fresshe y-grave,

I bad men shulde me my couche make;
For deyntee of the newe someres sake, ¹⁰⁰
I bad hem strowe floures on my bed.
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hed,
I fel a-slepe with-in an houre or two.
Me mette how I was in the medew tho,
And that I romed in that same gyse,
To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse.
Fair was this medew, as thoughte me overal;

With floures swote embrowded was it al;
As for to speke of gomme, or erbe, or tree,
Comparisoun may noon y-maked be. ¹¹⁰
For hit surmounted pleylny alle odoures,
And eek of riche beaute alle floures.
Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
Of winter, that him naked made and mat,⁴
And with his swerd of cold so sore had greved.

Now had the atempre sonne al that releved,
And clothed him in grene al newe agayn.
The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
That from the panter⁵ and the net ben ¹¹⁹
scaped,

Upon the fouler, that hem made a-whaped⁶

In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
In his despyt, hem thoughte hit did hem good

To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
The foule cherl that, for his covetyse,
Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
This was hir song — 'The fouler we defye!'
Somme songen [layes] on the braunches clere

Of love and [May], that joye hit was to here,

In worship and in preysing of hir make,⁷
And of the newe blisful someres sake, ¹³⁰
That songen, 'Blissed be seynt Valentyn!
[For] at his day I chees yow to be myn,
With-oute repenting, myn herte swete!'
And therwith-al hir bekens gonnen mete.
They dide honour and humble obeisances,

And after diden other observaunces
Right [plesing] un-to love and to nature;
So ech of hem [doth wel] to creature.
This song to herkne I dide al myn entente,
For-why I mette⁸ I wiste what they mente.
Til at the laste a larke song above: ¹⁴¹
'I see, quod she, 'the mighty god of love!
Lo! yond he cometh, I see his winges sprede!'

The gan I loken endelong the mede,
And saw him come, and in his hond a quene,
Clothed in ryal abite al of grene.
A fret⁹ of gold she hadde next hir heer,
And up-on that a whyt coron she beer
With many floures, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, right as the dayesye ¹⁵⁰
I-coroned is with whyte leves lyte,
Swich were the floures of hir coron whyte.
For of o perle fyn and oriental
Hir whyte coron was y-maked al;
For which the whyte coron, above the grene,

Made hir lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eek the fret of gold above.
Y-clothed was this mighty god of love
Of silk, y-brouded¹⁰ ful of grene greves;
A garlond on his heed of rose-leves ¹⁶⁰
Steked al with lillie floures newe;
But of his face I can nat seyn the hewe.
For sekirly his face shoon so brighte,
That with the gleem a-stoned was the sighte;

A furlong-wey I mighte him nat beholde.
But at the laste in hande I saw him holde

¹ of quite another matter. ² arbor. ³ With raised seats of turf. ⁴ dead. ⁵ large bird-net. ⁶ scared.

⁷ their mate.
⁸ ornament.

⁹ Because I dreamt.
¹⁰ embroidered.

Two fyry dartes, as the gledes¹ rede;
And angellich his wenges gan he sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
Al-gate² me thoughte he mighte wel y-
see;

170

For sternely on me he gan biholde,
So that his lokyng doth myn herte colde.
And by the hande he held the noble queene,
Coroumed with whyte, and clothed al in
grene.

So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men wolde
seke,

Half hir beautee shulde men nat finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
Hir name was Alceste the debonayre;
I prey to God that ever falle she fayre! 180
For ne hadde confort been of hir presence,
I had be deed, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes and his chere,
As, whan tyme is, her-after ye shal here.
Byhind this god of love, up-on this grene,
I saw comyng of ladyës nyntene
In ryal abite, a ful esy pas,
And after hem com of women swich a
tras³

That, sin that God Adam made of erthe,
The thredde part of women, ne the fertehe,
Ne wende I nat by possibillitee 191
Hadden ever in this world y-be;
And trewe of love thise women were
echoon.

Now whether was that a wonder thing
or noon,

That, right anon as that they gonme espye
This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
Ful sodeinly they stinten alle at-ones,
And kneled adoun, as it were for the
nones.

And after that they wenten in compas,
Daunsinge aboute this flour an esy pas, 200
And songen, as it were in carole-wyse,
This balade, which that I shal yow devyse.

BALADE

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al a-down;
Hyd, Jonathas,⁴ al thy friendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisson;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude⁵ and Eleyne,⁶
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.⁷

Thy faire bodye, lat hit nat appere, 210
Lavyne; and thou, Lucesse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghte love so dere,
Eek Cleopatre, with al thy passioune,
Hyde ye your trouthe in love and your re-
noun;

And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich
peyne:

Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle in-fere,
Eek Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun, 220
Mak of your trouthe in love no bost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre⁸ or Adriane,⁹ ne pleyne;
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Whan that this balade al y-songen was,
Upon the softe and swote grene gras,
They setten hem ful softly adoun,
By ordre alle in compas, alle enveroun.
First sat the god of love, and than this queene
With the whyte coroun, clad in grene;
And sithen al the remenant by and by,¹⁰ 230
As they were of degree,¹¹ ful curteisly;
Ne nat a word was spoken in the place
The mounce of a furlong-wey of space.¹²

I, leneing faste by under a bente,¹³
Abood, to knowen what this peple mente,
As stille as any stoon; til at the laste,
The god of love on me his eye caste,
And seyde, 'Who resteth ther?' and I
answerde

Un-to his axing, whan that I him herde,
And seyde, 'Sir, hit am I'; and cam him
neer, 240
And salued him. Quod he, 'What dostow
heer

In my presence, and that so boldly?
For it were better worthy, trewely,
A werm to comen in my sight than thou.'
'And why, sir,' quod I, 'and hit lyke
yow?'

'For thou,' quod he, 'art ther-to nothing
able.'¹⁴

My servaunts been alle wyse and honour-
able.

Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,¹⁵
And of myne olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hinderest hem, with thy translacioun,
And lettest¹⁶ folk to han devocioun 251

¹ firebrands. ² Nevertheless. ³ heap. ⁴ Jonathan. ⁵ Iseult, Isolde. ⁶ Elaine who loved Lancelot, or Helen of Troy. ⁷ bedim.

⁸ Hypermeestra. ⁹ Ariadne. ¹⁰ alongside. ¹¹ according to rank. ¹² The amount of time it takes to go a furlong. ¹³ little hill. ¹⁴ suitable. ¹⁵ makes war upon. ¹⁶ dost hinder.

To serven me, and haldest hit folye
To troste on me. Thou mayst hit nat
denye;

For in pleyn text, hit nedeth nat to glose,¹
Thou hast translated the Romauns of the
Rose,

That is an heresyse ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And thinkest in thy wit, that is ful cool,²
That he nis but a verray propre fool
That loveth paramours,³ to harde and
hote. 260

Wel wot I ther-by thou beginnest dote
As olde foles, whan hir spirit fayleth;
Than blame they folk, and wite nat what
hem ayleth.

Hast thou nat mad in English eek the book
How that Crisseide Troilus forsook,
In shewing how that women han don mis?
But natheles, answer me now to this,
Why noldest thou as wel han seyde good-
nesse

Of women, as thou hast seyde wikkednesse?
Was ther no good matere in thy minde, 270
Ne in alle thy bokes coudest thou nat finde
Sum story of women that were goode and
trewe?

Yis! God wot, sixty bokes olde and newe
Hast thou thy-self, alle fulle of stories grete,
That bothe Romaines and eek Grekes trete
Of sundry women, which lyf that they ladde,
And ever an hundred gode ageyn oon badde.
This knoweth God, and alle clerkes eke,
That usen swiche materes for to seke. 279
What seith Valerie,⁴ Titus,⁵ or Claudian⁶?
What seith Jerome ageyns Jovinian?⁷

How clene maydens, and how trewe wyves,
How stedfast widwes during al hir lyves,
Telleth Jerome; and that nat of a fewe,
But, I dar seyn, an hundred on a rewe;
That hit is pitee for to rede, and routhe,
The wo that they enduren for hir trouthe.
For to hir love were they so trewe,
That, rather than they wolde take a newe,
They chosen to be dede in sundry wyse,
And deyden, as the story wol devyse; 291
And some were brend, and some were cut
the hals,⁸

And some dreynt,⁹ for they wolden nat be
fals.

¹ explain it away. ² stupid. ³ like a lover.
⁴ Supposed author of a bitter mediæval treatise
against marriage.

⁵ Livy. ⁶ In *his De Raptu Proserpinae*?

⁷ The Saint's famous tirade against women and
marriage. ⁸ had their throats cut. ⁹ drowned.

For alle kepted they hir maydenhed,
Or elles wedlok, or hir widwehed.
And this thing was nat kept for holinesse,
But al for verray vertu and clenness,
And for men shulde sette on hem no lak,¹⁰
And yit they weren hethen, al the pak,
That were so sore adrad of alle shame. 300
These olde women kepte so hir name,
That in this world I trow men shal nat finde
A man that coude be so trewe and kinde,
As was the leste woman in that tyde.
What seith also the epistles of Ovyde
Of trewe wyves, and of hir labour?
What Vincent, in his Storial Mirour? ¹¹
Eek al the world of autours maystow here,
Cristen and hethen, trete of swich matere;
It nedeth nat alday thus for t'endyte, 310
But yit I sey, what eyleth thee to wryte
The draf¹² of stories, and forgo the corn?
By seint Venus, of whom that I was born,
Although [that] thou reneyed hast my
lay,¹³

As othere olde foles many a day,
Thou shalt repente hit, that hit shal be
sene!

Than spak Alceste, the worthieste quene,
And seyde, 'God, right of your curtesye,
Ye moten herken if he can repleye
Ageyns these points that ye han to him
meved; 320

A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deitee he shal be stable,
And therto rightful and eek merciable.
He shal nat rightfully his yre wreke
Or he have herd the tother party speke.
Al ne is nat gospel that is to yow pleyned;
The god of love herth many a tale y-feyned.
For in your court is many a losengeour,¹⁴
And many a queynte totelere¹⁵ accusour,
That tabouren¹⁶ in your eres many a thing
For hate, or for jelous imagining, 331
And for to han with yow som daliaunce.
Envye (I prey to God yeve hir mischaunce!)
Is lavender¹⁷ in the grete court alway.
For she ne parteth, neither night ne day,
Out of the hous of Cesar; thus seith
Dante;¹⁸

Who-so that goth, alwey she moot [nat]
wante.

This man to yow may wrongly been ac-
cused,

Ther as by right him oghte been excused.

¹⁰ reproach. ¹¹ The *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent
of Beauvais, thirteenth century. ¹² chaff.

¹³ renounced my religion. ¹⁴ flatterer. ¹⁵ tattling.
¹⁶ drum. ¹⁷ laundress, harlot. ¹⁸ *Inferno*, xiii, 64.

Or elles, sir, for that this man is nyce,¹ 340
 He may translate a thing in no malyce,
 But for he useth bokes for to make,
 And takth non heed of what matere he
 take;

Therfor he wroot the Rose and eek Criseyde

Of innocence, and niste what he seyde;
 Or him was boden make thilke tweye
 Of som persone, and durste hit nat with-
 seye;

For he hath writen many a book er this.
 He ne hath nat doon so greuously amis
 To translaten that olde clerkes wryten, 350
 As thogh that he of malice wolde endyten
 Despyt of love, and hadde him-self y-
 wrought.

This shulde a rightwys lord han in his
 thocht,

And nat be lyk tiraunts of Lumbardye,
 That usen wilfulhed and tyrannye,
 For he that king or lord is naturel,
 Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel,
 As is a fermour,² to doon the harm he
 can.

He moste thinke hit is his lige man,
 And that him oweth, of verray duetee, 360
 Shewen his peple pleyn benignitee,
 And wel to here hir excusaciouns,
 And hir compleyntes and peticiouns,
 In duewe tyme, whan they shal hit profre.
 This is the sentence of the philosophre:
 A king to kepe his liges in justyce,
 With-outen doute, that is his offyce.
 And therto is a king ful depe y-sworn,
 Ful many an hundred winter heer-biforn;
 And for to kepe his lordes hir degree, 370
 As hit is right and skilful that they be
 Enhauned and honoured, and most dere —
 For they ben half-goddess in this world
 here —

This shal he doon, bothe to pore [and]
 riche,

Al be that her estat be nat a-liche,
 And han of pore folk compassioun.
 For lo, the gentil kind of the lioun!
 For whan a flye offendeth him or byteth,
 He with his tayl away the flye smytheth
 Al esily; for, of his genterye, 380
 Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye,
 As doth a curre or elles another beste.
 In noble corage oghte been areste,
 And weyen every thing by equitee,
 And ever han reward to his owen degree.

¹ foolish.

² farmer of taxes, extortioner.

For, sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord
 To dampne a man with-oute answer or
 word;

And, for a lord, that is ful foul to use.
 And if so be he may him nat excuse, 389
 [But] axeth mercy with a sorweful herte,
 And profreth him, right in his bare sherte,
 To been right at your owne jugement,
 Than oghte a god, by short aysement,
 Considre his owne honour and his trespas.
 For sith no cause of deeth lyth in this cas,
 Yow oghte been the lighter merceiable;
 Leteth your yre, and beth somwhat treftable!

The man hath served yow of his conning,
 And forthered your lawe with his making.
 Whyl he was yong, he kepte your estat; 400
 I not wher he be now a renegat.
 But wel I wot, with that he can endyte,
 He hath made lewed folk delyte
 To serve you, in preysing of your name.
 He made the book that hight the Hous of
 Fame,

And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duch-
 esse,

And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
 And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte
 Of Thebes, thogh the story is knownen lyte;
 And many an ympe³ for your halydayes,
 That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;
 And for to speke of other besinesse, 412
 He hath in prose translated Boëce;
 And of the Wreched Engendring of Man-
 kinde,

As man may in pope Innocent y-finde;
 And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle;
 He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,
 Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;
 Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;
 He hath mad many a lay and many a
 thing. 420

Now as ye been a god, and eek a king,
 I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
 I axe yow this man, right of your grace,
 That ye him never hurte in al his lyve;
 And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,⁴
 He shal no more agilen⁵ in this wyse;
 But he shal maken, as ye wil devyse,
 Of wemen trewe in loveinge al hir lyve,
 Wher-so ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
 And forthren yow, as muche as he mis-
 seyde 430

Or in the Rose or elles in Criseyde.'

The god of love answerde hir thus anon,
 'Madame,' quod he, 'hit is so long agoon

³ hymn.

⁴ forthwith.

⁵ be guilty.

That I yow knew so charitable and trewe,
That never yit, sith that the world was
newe,

To me ne fond I better noon than ye;
That, if that I wol save my degree,
I may ne wol nat warne your requeste;
Al lyth in yow, doth with him what yow
leste, 439

And al foryeve, with-uten lenger space;
For who-so yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the
more;

And demeth ye what he shal do therfore.
Go thanke now my lady heer,' quod he.

I roos, and doun I sette me on my knee,
And seyde thus: 'Madame, the God above
Foryelde¹ yow, that ye the god of love
Han maked me his wrathe to foryive;
And yeve me grace so long for to live,
That I may knowe soothly what ye be, 450
That han me holpen, and put in swich de-
greee.

But twerely I wende, as in this cas,
Naught have agilt, ne doon to love tres-
pas.

Forwhy a trewe man, with-uten drede,
Hath nat to parten with² a theves dede;
Ne a trewe lover oghte me nat blame,
Thogh that I speke a fals lover som shame.
They oghte rather with me for to holde,
For that I of Creseyde wroot or tolde,
Or of the Rose; what-so myn auctour
mente,

Algate, God wot, hit was myn entente 461
To forthren trouthe in love and hit cheryce;
And to be war fro falsnesse and fro vyce
By swich ensample; this was my meninge.'

And she answerde, 'Lat be thyn argu-
inge;

For Love ne wol nat countrepleted³ be
In right ne wrong; and lerne this at me!
Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right
ther-to.

Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt
do

For thy trespass, and understond hit here:
Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yeer by
yere, 471

The moste party of thy lyve spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wemen, maideness and wyves,
That were trewe in lovings al hir lyves;
And telle of false men that hem bitrayen,
That al hir lyf ne doon nat but assayen

How many wemen they may doon a shame;
For in your world that is now holden game.
And thogh thou lesteth nat a lover be, 480
Spek wel of love; this penance yeve I thee.
And to the god of love I shal so preye,
That he shal charge his servants, by any
weye,

To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte;
Go now thy wey, thy penance is but lyte.'

The god of love gan smyle, and than he
seyde,

'Wostow,' quod he, 'wher this be wyf or
mayde,

Or queene, or countesse, or of what degree,
That hath so litel penance yeven thee,
That hast deserved sorer for to smerte? 490
But pitee renneth sone in gentil herte;
That mayst thou seen, she kytheth⁴ what
she is.'

And I answerde, 'Nay, sir, so have I blis,
No more but that I see wel she is good.'

'That is a trewe tale, by myn hood,'
Quod Love, 'and that thou knowest wel,
pardee,

If hit be so that thou avyse thee.
Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
The grete goodnesse of the queene Alceste,
That turned was into a dayesye: 500
She that for hir husbonde chees to dye,
And eek to goon to helle, rather than he,
And Ercules rescued hir, pardee,
And broghte hir out of helle agayn to
blis?'

And I answerde ageyn, and seyde, 'Yis,
Now knowe I hir! And is this good Alceste,
The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste?
Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf.
That bothe after hir deeth, and in hir lyf,
Hir grete bountee doubleth hir renoun! 510
Wel hath she quit me myn affeccoun
That I have to hir flour, the dayesye!
No wonder is thogh Jove hir stellifye,
As telleth Agaton,⁵ for hir goodnesse!
Hir whyte coroun berth of hit wisesse;
For also many vertues hadde she,
As smale floures in hir coroun be.
In remembrance of hir and in honour,
Cibella⁶ made the dayesye and the flour
Y-coroned al with whyt, as men may see, 520
And Mars yaf to hir coroun reed, pardee,
In stede of rubies, set among the whyte.'
Therwith this queene wex reed for shame
a lyte,

⁴ makes known. ⁵ Possibly the Athenian tragic
poet of the fifth century B.C. ⁶ Cybele.

¹ Repay ² has no part in. ³ pleaded against.

Whan she was preysed so in hir presence.
Than seyde Love, 'A ful gret negligence
Was hit to thee, to write unstedfastnesse
Of women, sith thou knowest hir good-
nesse

By preef, and eek by stories heer-biforn;
Let be the chaf, and wryt wel of the corn.
Why noldest thou han writen of Alceste, ⁵³⁰
And leten Criseide been a-slepe and reste?
For of Alceste shulde thy wryting be,
Sin that thou wost that kalender ¹ is she
Of goodnesse, for she taughte of fyn lov-
inge,

And namely of wyfhood the livinge,
And alle the boundes that she oghte kepe;
Thy litel wit was thilke tyme a-slepe.
But now I charge thee, upon thy lyf, ⁵³⁸
That in thy legend thou make of this wyf,
Whan thou hast othere smale maad be-
fore;

And fare now wel, I charge thee no more.
At Cleopatre I wol that thou beginne;
And so forth; and my love so shalt thou
winne.²

And with that word of sleep I gan a-awake,
And right thus on my Legend gan I make.

THE LEGEND OF CLEOPATRA

*Incipit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris, Egipti
regine.*

AFTER the deeth of Tholomee ² the king,
That al Egipte hadde in his governing,
Regned his quene Cleopataras;
Til on a tyme befel ther swiche a cas,
That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
For to conqueren regnes and honour
Unto the toun of Rome, as was usaunce,
To have the world unto her obeisaunce;
And, sooth to seye, Antonius was his name.
So fil hit, as Fortune him oghte ³ a shame ¹⁰
When he was fallen in prosperitee,
Rebel unto the toun of Rome is he.
And over al this, the suster of Cesar,
He lafte hir falsly, er that she was war,
And wolde algates han another wyf;
For whiche he took with Rome and Cesar
stryf.

Natheles, for-sooth, this ilke senatour
Was a ful worthy gentil werreyour,
And of his deeth hit was ful greet damage.
But love had broght this man in swiche a
rage,

¹ example.

² Ptolemy.

³ owed.

20

And him so narwe bounden in his las,
Al for the love of Cleopataras,
That al the world he sette at no value.
Him thoughte, nas to him no thing so due
As Cleopatras for to love and serve;
Him roghte ⁴ nat in armes for to sterve
In the defence of hir, and of hir right.

This noble quene eek lovede so this
knight,

Through his desert, and for his chivalrye;
As certainly, but-if that bokes lye, ³⁰
He was, of persone and of gentillesse,
And of discrecioun and hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may,
And she was fair as is the rose in May.
And, for to maken shortly is the beste,
She wex his wyf, and hadde him as hir
leste.

The wedding and the feste to devyse,
To me, that have y-take swiche emprise
Of so many a storie for to make,
Hit were to long, lest that I sholde slake ⁴⁰
Of thing that bereth more effect and charge;⁵
For men may overlade a ship or barge;
And forthy to th'effect than wol I skippe,
And al the remenant, I wol lete hit slippe.

Octovian, that wood ⁶ was of this dede,
Shoop ⁷ him an ost on Antony to lede
Al-outerly for his destruccioun,
With stoute Romans, cruel as leoun;
To ship they wente, and thus I let hem
saile.

Antonius was war, and wol nat faile ⁵⁰
To meten with thise Romans, if he may;
Took eek his reed, and bothe, upon a day,
His wyf and he, and al his ost, forth wente
To shippe anon, no lenger they ne stente;
And in the see hit happed hem to mete.
Up goth ⁸ the trompe, and for to shoute
and shete,⁹

And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.¹⁰
With grisly soun out goth ¹¹ the grete gonne,
And heterly ¹² they hurtlen ¹³ al at ones,
And fro the top ¹⁴ down cometh the grete
stones.

60

In goth the grapenel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes, and the shering-hokes.
In with the polax presseth he and he;
Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
And out agayn, and dryveth him over-
borde;

He stingeth him upon his speres orde;¹⁵

⁴ recked. ⁵ weight. ⁶ angry. ⁷ Shaped, i.e. pre-
pared. ⁸ sounds. ⁹ shoot, loose infinitive. ¹⁰ To attack
with the sun at their back. ¹¹ off goes. ¹² ferociously.
¹³ clash together. ¹⁴ station up on the mast. ¹⁵ point.

He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be
blythe;

He poureth pesen upon the hacches slider;¹
With pottes ful of lym² they goon to-
gider;

And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til, at the last, as every thing hath ende,
Antony is shent,³ and put him to the flighte,
And al his folk to-go,⁴ that best go mighte.

Fleeth eek the queen, with al her purple
sail,

For strokes, which that wente as thikke as
hail;

No wonder was, she mighte hit nat en-
dure.

And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
'Alas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!
My worshiþe in this day thus have I lorn!' ⁸⁰
And for dispeyr out of his witte he sterte,
And roof⁵ him-self anoon through-out the
herte

Er that he ferther wente out of the place.
His wyf, that coude of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipte is fled, for drede and for dis-
tresse.

But herkneth, ye that speke of kindenesse,
Ye men, that falsly sweren many an ooth
That ye wol dye, if that your love be
wrooth,

Heer may ye seen of women whiche a
trouthel!

This woful Cleopatre hath mad swich
routhe ⁹⁰

That ther nis tonge noon that may hit
telle.

But on the morwe she wol no lenger
dwelle,

But made hir subtil werkmen make a
shryne

Of alle the rubies and the stones fyne
In al Egipte that she coude espye;
And putte ful the shryne of spycerye,
And leet the cors embaume; and forth she
fette

This dede cors, and in the shryne hit
shette.

And next the shryne a pit than doth she
grave;

And alle the serpents that she mighte
have, ¹⁰⁰

¹ Apparently "pours peas upon the slippery deck,"
i.e. to make the deck slippery. But v. *Kittredge*
Anniversary Papers, p. 149, for another explanation.

² Loose quicklime to blind the enemy.
³ ruined. ⁴ disperse. ⁵ pierced.

She putte hem in that grave, and thus she
seyde:

'Now love, to whom my sorweful herte
obeyde

So ferforthly that, fro that blisful houre
That I yow swor to been al frely youre,
I mene yow, Antonius my knight!
That never waking, in the day or night.
Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce;
And in my-self this covenant made I tho,
That, right swich as ye felten, wele or
wo, ¹¹⁰

As ferforth as hit in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wyfhood ay,
The same wolde I felen, lyf or deeth.
And thilke covenant, whyl me lasteth
breeth,

I wol fulfille, and that shal wel be sene;
Was never unto hir love a trewer quene.'
And with that word, naked, with ful good
herte,

Among the serpents in the pit she sterte,
And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
Anoon the neddres gonne hir for to
stinge, ¹²⁰

And she hir deeth receyeveth, with good
chere,

For love of Antony, that was hir so
dere:—

And this is storial sooth,⁶ hit is no fable.
Now, er I finde a man thus trewe and
stable,

And wol for love his deeth so freely
take,

I pray God lat our hedes never ake!

Explicit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris.

THE LEGEND OF LUCRETIA

Incipit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris.

Now moot I seyn the exiling of kinges
Of Rome, for hir horrible doinges,
And of the laste king Tarquinius,
As saith Ovyde and Titus Livius.
But for that cause telle I nat this storie,
But for to preise and drawn to memorie
The verray wyf, the verray trewe Lucesse,
That, for her wyfhood and her steadfast-
nesse,

Nat only that thise payens her comende,
But he, that cleped is in our legende ¹⁰

⁶ historical truth.

The grete Austin,¹ hath greet compas-
sion

Of this Lucresse, that starf at Rome
toun;

And in what wyse, I wol but shortly
trete,

And of this thing I touche but the grete.²

Whan Ardea beseged was aboute
With Romans, that ful sterne were and
stoute,

Ful longe lay the sege, and litel wroghte,³
So that they were half ydel, as hem
thoghte;

And in his pley Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to jape, for he was light of
tonge, 20

And seyde, that 'It was an ydel lyf;
No man did ther no more than his wyf;
And lat us speke of wyves, that is best;
Praise every man his owne, as him lest,
And with our speche lat us ese our herte.'

A knight, that highte Colatyne, up
sterde,

And seyde thus, 'Nay, for hit is no nede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede.
I have a wyf,' quod he, 'that, as I trowe,
Is holden good of alle that ever her
knowe; 30

Go we to-night to Rome, and we shul
see.'

Tarquinius answerde, 'That lyketh me.'
To Rome be they come, and faste hem
dighte 4

To Colatynes hous, and doun they lighte,
Tarquinius, and eek this Colatyne.

The husband knew the estres⁵ wel and
fyne,

And prively into the hous they goon;
Nor at the gate porter was ther noon;
And at the chambre-dore they abyde.

This noble wyf sat by her beddes syde 40
Dischevele, for no malice she ne thoghte;
And softe wolde our book seith that she
wroghte

To kepen her fro slouth and ydelnesse;
And bad her servants doon hir businesse,
And axeth hem, 'What tydings heren
ye?

How seith men of the sege, how shal hit
be?

God wolde the walles weren falle adoun;
Myn husband is so longe out of this toun,

For which the dreed doth me so sore
smerte,

Right as a swerd hit stingeth to myn
herte 50

Whan I think on the sege or of that
place;

God save my lord, I preye him for his
grace: 7 —

And ther-with-al ful tenderly she weep,
And of her werk she took no more keep,
But mekely she leet her eyen falle;

And thilke semblant sat her wel with-alle.
And eek her teres, ful of honestee,

Embelisshed her wyfly chastitee;
Her countenaunce is to her herte digne,

For they acordeden in dede and signe. 60
And with that word her husband Colatyn,

Or she of him was war, com sterting in,
And seide, 'Dreed thee noght, for I am
here!'

And she anon up roos, with blisful chere,
And kiste him, as of wyves is the wone.⁶

Tarquinius, this proude kinges sone,
Conceived⁷ hath her beautee and her chere,
Her yellow heer, her shap, and her manere,
Her hew, her wordes that she hath com-
pleyned,

And by no crafte her beautee nas nat
feyned; 70

And caughte to this lady swich desyr,
That in his herte brende as any fyr
So woody, that his wit was al forgeten.

For wel, thoghte he, she sholde nat be
geten;

And ay the more that he was in dispair,
The more he coveteth and thoghte her
fair.

His blinde lust was al his covetinge.

A-morwe, whan the brid began to singe,
Unto the sege he comth ful privily,
And by himself he walketh sobrelly, 80

Th' image of her recording alwey newe;
'Thus lay her heer, and thus fresh was her
hewe;

Thus sat, thus spak, thus span; this was
her chere,

Thus fair she was, and this was her manere.'
Al this conceit his herte bath now y-take.

And, as the see, with tempest al to-shake,
That, after whan the storm is al ago,

Yet wol the water quappe⁸ a day or two,
Right so, thogh that her forme wer ab-
sent,

The plesaunce of her forme was present; 90

6 wont, custom. 7 Perceived. 8 be tempestuous.

¹ St. Augustine in his *City of God*. ² main points.

³ The beleaguering was long and ineffective.

⁴ repaired. ⁵ rooms.

But natheles, nat plesaunce, but delyt,
Or an unrightful talent¹ with despyt;
'For, maugre her,² she shal my lemman³
be;

Hap helpeth hardy man alday,⁴ quod he;
'What ende that I make, hit shal be so;'
And girt him with his swerde, and gan to

go;
And forth he rit⁵ til he to Rome is come,
And al aloon his wey than hath he nome⁶
Unto the house of Colatyn ful right.
Doun was the sonne, and day hath lost his
light; 100

And in he com un-to a privy halke,⁷
And in the night ful theefly⁸ gan he stalke,
Whan every wight was to his reste broght,
Ne no wight had of tresoun swich a thoght.
Were hit by window or by other gin,⁹
With swerde y-drawe, shortly he comth in
Ther as she lay, this noble wyf Lucesse.
And, as she wook, her bed she felte presse.
'What beste is that,' quod she, 'that weyeth
thus?'

'I am the kinges sone, Tarquinius,' 110
Quod he, 'but and thou crye, or noise
make,

Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke God that formed man on lyve,
This swerd through-out thyn herte shal I
ryve.'

And ther-withal unto her throte he sterte,
And sette the point al sharp upon her
herte.

No word she spak, she hath no might
therto.

What shal she sayn? her wit is al ago.
Right as a wolf that fynt¹⁰ a lomb aloon,
To whom shal she compleyne, or make
moon? 120

What! shal she fighte with an hardy
knight?

Wel wot men that a woman hath no might.
What! shal she crye, or how shal she
asterte

That hath her by the throte, with swerde
at herte?

She axeth grace, and seith al that she
can.

'Ne wolt thou nat,' quod he, this cruel
man,

'As wisly¹¹ Jupiter my soule save,
As I shal in the stable slee thy knave,

¹ passion. ² in spite of herself. ³ mistress.
⁴ Fortune always favors the brave. ⁵ rideth.
⁶ taken. ⁷ corner. ⁸ like a thief. ⁹ contrivance.
¹⁰ findeth. ¹¹ So sure as.

And leye him in thy bed, and loude crye,
That I thee finde in suche avouterie;¹² 130
And thus thou shalt be deed, and also lese¹³
Thy name, for thou shalt none other chese.'

This Romain wyves loveden so hir name
At thilke tyme, and dredden so the shame,
That, what for fere of slaundre and drede
of deeth,

She loste bothe at-ones wit and breeth,
And in a swough¹⁴ she lay and wex so
deed,

Men mighte smyten of her arm or heed;
She feleth no-thing, neither foul ne fair.

Tarquinius, that art a kinges eyr, 140
And sholdest, as by linage and by right,
Doon as a lord and as a verray knight,
Why hastow doon dispyt to chivalrye?
Why hastow doon this lady vilanye?
Allas! of thee this was a vileins dede!

But now to purpos; in the story I rede,
Whan he was goon, al this mischaunce is
falle.

This lady sente after her frendes alle,
Fader, moder, husbond, al y-fere;¹⁵
And al dischevele, with her heres clere, 150
In habit swich as women used tho
Unto the buryng of her frendes go,
She sit in halle with a sorweful sighte.
Her frendes axen what her aylen mighte,
And who was deed? And she sit ay wep-
inge,

A word for shame ne may she forth out-
bringe,

Ne upon hem she dorste nat beholde.
But atte laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde,
This rewful cas, and al this thing horrible.
The wo to tellen hit were impossible, 160
That she and alle her frendes made atones.¹⁶

Al hadde folkes hertes been of stones,
Hit mighte have made hem upon her rewe,
Her herte was so wyfly and so trewe.
She seide, that, for her gilt ne for her
blame,

Her husbond sholde nat have the foul
name,

That wolde she nat suffre, by no wey.
And they answerden alle, upon hir fey,
That they foryeve hit her, for hit was right;
Hit was no gilt, hit lay nat in her might; 170
And seiden her ensamples many oon.

But al for noght; for thus she seide anon,
'Be as be may,' quod she, 'of forgiving,
I wol nat have no forgift¹⁷ for no-thing.'

¹² adultery. ¹³ lose. ¹⁴ swoon.
¹⁵ together. ¹⁶ at once. ¹⁷ forgiveness.

But prively she caughte forth a knyf,
 And therwith-al she rafte her-self her-lyf;
 And as she fel adoun, she caste her look,
 And of her clothes yit she hede took;
 For in her falling yit she hadde care
 Lest that her feet or swiche thing lay
 bare; 180

So wel she loved clenness and eek trouthe.

Of her had al the toun of Rome routhe,
 And Brutus by her chaste blode hath swore
 That Tarquin sholde y-banisht be ther-fore,
 And al his kin; and let the peple calle,
 And openly the tale he tolde hem alle,
 And openly let carie her on a bere
 Through al the toun, that men may see and
 here

The horrible deed of her oppressioun.
 Ne never was ther king in Rome toun 190
 Sin thilke day; and she was holden there
 A seint, and ever her day y-halwed dere

As in hir lawe: and thus endeth Lucesse,
 The noble wyf, as Titus bereth witnesse.

I tell hit, for she was of love so trewe,
 Ne in her wille she chaunged for no newe.
 And for the stable herte, sad and kinde,
 That in these women men may alday finde;
 Ther as they caste hir herte, ther hit
 dwelleth.

For wel I wot, that Crist him-selve
 telleth, 200

That in Israel, as wyd as is the lond,
 That so gret feith in al the lond he ne
 fond

As in a woman; and this is no lye.
 And as of men, loketh which tirannye
 They doon alday; assay hem who so liste,
 The trewest is ful brotel ¹ for to triste.

Explicit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris.

¹ brittle.

MINOR POEMS

CHAUCERS WORDES UNTO ADAM, HIS OWNE SCRIVEYN¹

ADAM scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
Boece or Troilus to wryten newe,
Under thy lokkes thou most have the scalle,²
But³ after my making thou wryte trewe.
So ofte a daye I mot thy werk renewe,
Hit to correcte and eek to rubbe and scrape;
And al is through thy negligence and rape.⁴

THE FORMER AGE

A BLISFUL lyf, a paisible and a swete
Ledden the peples in the former age;
They helde hem payed⁵ of fruites, that
they ete,
Which that the feldees yave hem by usage;
They ne were nat forpampred with out-
rage;⁶
Unknowen was the quern⁷ and eek the
melle;⁸
They eten mast, hawes, and swich pounage,⁹
And dronken water of the colde welle.

Yit nas the ground nat wounded with the
plough,
But corn up-sprong, unsowe of mannes
hond,¹⁰
The which they guiden,¹⁰ and eete nat half
y-nough.
No man yit knew the forwes¹¹ of his lond;
No man the fyr out of the flint yit fond;
Un-korven and un-grobbed¹² lay the vyne;
No man yit in the mortar spyces grond
To clarre,¹³ ne to sause of galantyne.¹⁴

No mader, welde, or wood no litestere
Ne knew;¹⁵ the flees was of his former hewe;

¹ scrivener, scribe. ² scab. ³ Unless. ⁴ destructiveness. ⁵ pleased. ⁶ spoiled by pampering with excessive luxury. ⁷ hand-mill. ⁸ mill. ⁹ swine's food. ¹⁰ bruised. ¹¹ furrows. ¹² Unpruned and uncultivated. ¹³ For spiced wine. ¹⁴ Galantine was an elaborate fish-sauce.

¹⁵ No dyer knew the use of madder, weld, or woad — three dye-plants.

No flesh ne wiste offence of egge¹⁶ or spere;
No coyn ne knew man which was fals or
trewe;
No ship yit karf the wawes grene and
blewe;
No marchaunt yit ne fette outlandish¹⁷
ware;
No trompes for the werres folk ne knewe,
No toures hey, and walles rounde or square.

What sholde it han avayled to werreye?¹⁸
Ther lay no profit, ther was no richesse;
But cursed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
That men first dide hir swety bysnesse
To grobbe up metal, lurking in darknesse,
And in the riveres first gemmes soghte. ³⁰
Allas ! than sprong up al the cursdnesse
Of covetyse, that first our sorwe broghte !

Thise tyrants putte hem gladly nat in
pres
No wildnesse¹⁹ ne no bussches for to winne
Ther poverte is, as seith Diogenes,
Ther as vitale is eek so skars and thinne
That noght but mast or apples is therinne.
But, ther as bagges been and fat vitale,
Ther wol they gon, and spare for no sinne
With al hir ost the cite for t'assaile. ⁴⁰

Yit were no paleis-chaumbres, ne non
halles;
In caves and [in] wodes softe and swete
Slepten this blissed folk with-oute walles,
On gras or leves in parfit quiete.
No doun of fetheres, ne no bleched shete
Was kid²⁰ to hem, but in seurtee they
slepte;
Hir hertes were al oon, with-oute galles,
Everich of hem his feith to other kepte.

Unforged was the hauberk and the plate;²¹
The lambish²² peple, voyd of alle vyce, ⁵⁰
Hadden no fantasye to debate,²³
But ech of hem wolde other wel cheryce;²⁴

¹⁶ edge, knife. ¹⁷ foreign. ¹⁸ fight. ¹⁹ wilder-
ness. ²⁰ known. ²¹ plate-armor. ²² innocent.
²³ no inclination to contend. ²⁴ cherish.

No pryde, non envye, non avaryce,
 No lord, no taylage¹ by no tyrannye;
 Humblesse and pees, good feith, the em-
 perice,
 [Fulfilled erthe of olde curtesye.]²

Yit was not Jupiter the likerous,³
 That first was fader of delicacye,⁴
 Come in this world; ne Nembrot,⁵ de-
 sirus⁶
 To reynen, had nat maad his toures hye.⁶
 Allas, allas! now may men wepe and crye!
 For in our dayes nis but covetysse
 [And] doublesnesse, and tresoun and envye,
 Poyssoun, manslauhtre, and mordre in son-
 dry wyse.

MERCILES BEAUTE: A TRIPLE ROUNDEL

I. CAPTIVITY

YOUR yën two wol slee me sodenly,
 I may the beauté of hem not sustene,
 So woundeth hit through-out my herte kene.

And but your word wol helen hastily
 My hertes wounde, whyl that hit is grene,
*Your yën two wol slee me sodenly,
 I may the beauté of hem not sustene.*

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
 That ye ben of my lyf and deeth the queue;
 For with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene.
*Your yën two wol slee me sodenly,*¹¹
*I may the beauté of hem not sustene,
 So woundeth hit through-out my herte kene.*

II. REJECTION

So hath your beauté fro your herte chaced
 Pitee, that me ne availleth not to pleyne;
 For Daunger halt⁷ your mercy in his
 cheyne.

Giltles my deeth thus han ye me purchaced;
 I sey yow sooth, me nedeth not to feyne;
*So hath your beauté fro your herte chaced
 Pitee, that me ne availleth not to pleyne.*¹⁰

Allas! that nature hath in yow compassed
 So greet beauté, that no man may atteyne
 To mercy, though he sterve for the payne.

*So hath your beauté fro your herte chaced
 Pitee, that me ne availleth not to pleyne;
 For Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.*

III. ESCAPE

Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
 I never think to ben in his prison lene;
 Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

He may answer, and seye this or that;³⁰
 I do no fors,⁸ I speke right as I mene.
*Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
 I never think to ben in his prison lene.*

Love hath my name y-strike out of his
 slet,⁹
 And he is strike out of my bokes clene
 For ever-mo; ther is non other mene.
*Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
 I never think to ben in his prison lene;
 Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.*

TRUTH¹⁰

FLEE fro the prees, and dwelle with soth-
 fastnesse,
 Suffyce unto thy good,¹¹ though hit be smal;
 For hord hath hate, and climbing tikel-
 nesse,¹²
 Prees hath envye, and wele blent¹³ overal;
 Savour¹⁴ no more than thee bihove shal;
 Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst
 rede;
 And trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.¹⁵

Tempest¹⁶ thee noght al croked to redresse,
 In trust of hir that turneth as a bal;¹⁷
 Gret reste stant in litel besinesse;¹⁰
 And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;¹⁸
 Stryve noght, as doth the crokke¹⁹ with the
 wal.
 Daunte²⁰ thy-self, that dauntest otheres
 dede;
 And trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,²¹
 The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.

⁸ I care not.

⁹ slate.

¹⁰ It has recently been shown that this exhortation was addressed to a conspicuously busy and ambitious associate of Chaucer's, Sir Philip la Vache. See *Modern Philology*, xi, p. 209.

¹¹ Be satisfied with your possessions. ¹² precariousness. ¹³ success blindeth. ¹⁴ Relish. ¹⁵ without doubt. ¹⁶ Vex. ¹⁷ i.e. Fortune. ¹⁸ kick against an awl. ¹⁹ pitcher. ²⁰ Subdue. ²¹ submission.

¹ taxation. ² Line supplied by Skeat. ³ lustful.
⁴ sinful luxury. ⁵ Nimrod. ⁶ i.e. E. bel.
⁷ Disdain holdeth.

Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of
thy stall!

Know thy contree, look up, thank God of
al;

Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee
lede: ²⁰

And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

ENVOY

Therefore, thou vache,¹ leve thyn old
wrecchednesse

Unto the world; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich
mede;

And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Explicit Le bon counseill de G. Chaucer.

GENTILESSE

THE firste stok, fader of gentilesse —²
What man that claymeth gentil for to be,
Must folowe his trace, and alle his wittes
dresse

Vertu to sewe,³ and vyces for to flee.
For unto vertu longeth dignitee,
And noght the revers, sauflly dar I deme,
Al were⁴ he mytre, croune, or diademe.

This firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,
Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,
Clene of his goste, and loved besinesse, ¹⁰
Against the vyce of slouth, in honestee;
And, but his heir love vertu, as dide he,
He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

Vyce may wel be heir to old richesse;
But ther may no man, as men may wel see,
Bequethe his heir his vertuous noblesse
That is appropred unto no degree,
But to the firste fader in magestee,
That maketh his heir him that can him
queme,⁵ ²⁰
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

¹ Cow, beast, a play on la Vache's name. His crest was a cow's hoof.

² The original gentle-man. These words without corresponding verb supply the antecedent to his in line 3.

³ follow. ⁴ Though he wear. ⁵ please.

LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE

BALADE

SOM tyme this world was so stedfast and
stable,

That mannes word was obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and deceivable,
That word and deed, as in conclusioun;
Ben no-thing lyk, for turned up so doun
Is al this world for mede and wilfulnesse,
That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable,
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
Among us now a man is holde unable, ¹⁰
But-if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wrecchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put doun, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun;
Pitee exyled, no man is merciabe.
Through covetyse is blent⁶ discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikel-
nesse, ²⁰

That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

LENVOY TO KING RICHARD

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
To thyn estat, don in thy region.
Shew forth thy sward of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthi-
nesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

LENVOY DE CHAUCER A SCOGAN

TO-BROKEN been the statuts hye in hevene
That creat were eternally to dure,
Sith that I see the brighte goddes seven⁷
Mow wepe and wayle, and passioun endure,
As may in erthe a mortal creature.
Allas, fro whennes may this thing procede?
Of whiche errour I deye almost for drede.

By worde eterne whylom was hit shape
That fro the fiftte cerce, in no manere,
Ne mighte a drope of teres doun escape. ¹⁰

⁶ blinded.

⁷ the planets.

But now so wepeth Venus in hir spere,
That with hir teres she wol drenche us
here.

Allas, Scogan! this is for thyn offence!
Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.¹

Hast thou not seyde, in blasphemie of this
goddess,
Through pryde, or through thy grete rakel-
nesse,²

Swich thing as in the lawe of love forbode
is?

That, for thy lady saw nat thy distresse,
Therfor thou yave hir up at Michelmessel!
Allas, Scogan! of olde folk ne yonge²⁰
Was never erst Scogan blamed for his
tonge!

Thou drowe in scorn Cupyde eek to record
Of thilke rebel word that thou hast spoken,
For which he wol no lenger be thy lord.
And, Scogan, thogh his bowe be nat broken,
He wol nat with his arwes been y-wroken.³
On thee, ne me, ne noon of our figure;⁴
We shul of him have neyther hurt ne cure.

Now certes, frend, I drede of thyn un-
happe,
Lest for thy gilt the wreche of Love pro-
cede

On alle hem that ben hore and rounde of
shape,³¹
That ben so lykly folk in love to spede.
Than shul we for our labour han no mede;
But wel I wot, thou wilt answer and seye:
'Lo! olde Griseld list to ryme and pleye!'

Nay, Scogan, sey not so, for I m'excuse,
God help me sol in no rym, doutelees,
Ne thinke I never of slepe wak my muse,
That rusteth in my shethe stille in pees.
Why! I was yong, I putte hir forth in
prees,⁴⁰
But al shal passe that men prose or ryme;
Take every man his turn, as for his tyme.

¹ This wretched deluge. Perhaps alluding to the
floods of 1393. ² rashness. ³ wreaked, revenged.

⁴ i.e. portly figure, cf. l. 31.

ENVOY

Scogan, that knelest at the stremes heed⁵
Of grace, of alle honour and worthinesse,
In th'ende of which streme I am dul as deed,
Forgete in solitarie wildernesse;⁶
Yet, Scogan, thanke on Tullius kindenesse,
Minne⁷ thy frend ther it may fructifye!
Far-wel, and lok thou never eft Love de-
fye!

THE COMPLAINT OF CHAUCER
TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

To you, my purse, and to non other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere!
I am so sorry, now that ye be light;
For certes, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd up-on my bere;
For whiche un-to your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,¹⁰
That of yelownesse hadde never pere,
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,⁸
Queene of comfort and of good companye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be to me my lyves light,
And saveour, as doun in this world here,
Out of this toun help me through your
might,

Sin that ye wole nat been my tresorerere;
For I am shave as nye as any frere.
But yit I pray un-to your curtesye:²⁰
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

LENVOY DE CHAUCER

O conquerour⁹ of Brutes Albion!
Which that by lyne and free eleccioun
Ben verray king, this song to you I sende;
And ye, that mowen al our harm amende,
Have minde up-on my supplicacioun!

⁵ Probably Windsor, where the court was.

⁶ Probably Greenwich.

⁷ Remember.

⁸ steersman. ⁹ Henry IV, 1390.

THOMAS HOCCEVE

EXTRAVAGANCE IN MEN'S DRESS

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 61-77)

BUT this me thinkith an abusioun,
To se on ¹ walke in gownes of scarlet,
xii yerdes wyd, with pendant sleeves downe
On the grounde, and the furrou therin set
Amountyng unto twenty pound or bet; ²
And if he for it payde have, he no good
Hath lefte him where-with for to bye an
hood.

For thogh he jette ³ forth among the prees,
And overloke every pore wight,
His cofre and eke his purs ben penylees, ¹⁰
He hath no more than he goth in ryght.⁴
For lond, rent, or catel,⁵ he may go light;
The weght of hem schal not so moche
payse ⁶
As doth his gowne. Is swiche array to
preyse?

Nay sothely, sone, it is al amys me think-
yth;
So pore a wight his lord to counterfete
In his array, in my conceyit it stynkith.
Certes to blame ben the lordes grete,
If that I durste seyn, that hir men lete
Usurpe swiche a lordly apparaille, ²⁰
Is not worth, my childe, withouten fayle.

Som tyme, afer men myghten lordes knowe
By there array, from other folke; but now
A man schal stody and musen a long
throwe ⁷

Whiche is whiche: O lordes, it sit ⁸ to yowe
Amende this, for it is for youre prow. ⁹
If twixt yow and youre men no difference
Be in array, lesse is youre reverence.

Also ther is another newe get, ¹⁰
A foul wast of cloth and an excessyf; ²⁰
Ther goth no lesse in a mannes tipet

Than of brood cloth a yerde, by my lif;
Me thynkyth this a verray inductif
Unto stelthe: ware hem of Hempen Lane!
For stelthe is medid with a chekelew bane. ¹¹

Let evere lord, his owne men deffende ¹²
Swiche gret array, and than, on my peryl,
This land within a while schal amende.
In Goddys name, putte it in exyl!
It is synne outragious and vyl; ⁴⁰
Lordes, if ye your estat and honour
Loven, fleemyth ¹³ this vicius errour!

What is a lord withouten his meynee?
I putte cas that his foos hym assaile
Sodenly in the stret. What help schale he,
Wos sleeves encombrous so syde ¹⁴ traile,
Do to his lord? He may hym nat availle;
In swych a cas he nys but a womman;
He may nat stand hym in steed of a man.

His armys two han ryght ynow to done, ⁶⁰
And sumwhat more, his sleeves up to holde;
The taillours, trow I, moot heerafter soone
Shape in the feeld; thay schal nat sprede
and folde

On hir bord, thogh thei never so fayn wolde,
The cloth that shal ben in a gowne wrought;
Take an hool cloth is best, for lesse is noght.

The skynner unto the feeld moot also,
His hous in London is to streyt and scars
To doon his craft; sum tyme it was nat so.
O lordes, yeve unto your men hir pars ¹⁵ ⁶⁰
That so doon, and aqwente hem bet with
Mars,

God of bataile; he loveth non array
That hurtyth manhode at preef ¹⁶ or assay.

Who now moost may bere on his bak at ones
Of cloth and furrou, hath a fressch renoun;
He is "a lusty man" clept for the nones;
But drapers and eek skynners in the toun,
For swich folk han a special orisoun

¹ one, people. ² better. ³ strut. ⁴ merely.
⁵ personal property, chattels, money. ⁶ weigh.
⁷ while. ⁸ belongs. ⁹ profit. ¹⁰ fashion.

¹¹ Stealing is rewarded by a choking death.
¹² forbid. ¹³ banish. ¹⁴ wide.
¹⁵ parts, portions. ¹⁶ proof.

That troppid¹ is with curses heere and
there, 69
And ay schal, til thei paid be for hir gere.

In dayes olde, whan smal apparaille
Suffisid unto hy estat or mene,
Was gret houshold wel stuffid of victaille;
But now housholdes ben ful selender and
lene,
For al the good that men may repe or glenc,
Wasted is in outrageous array,
So that housholdes men nat holde may.

Pryde hath wel lever bere an hungry mawe
To bedde, than lakke of array outrage; 80
He no prys settith be mesures lawe,
Ne takith of hym clothe, mete, ne wage:
Mesure is out of londe on pylgrymage;
But I suppose he schal resorte as blyve,²
For verray neede wol us therto dryve.

Ther may no lord tak up no newe gyse
But that a knave shal the same up take.
If lordes wolden in this wyse,
For to do swiche gownes to hem make
As men did in old tyme, I undertake 89
The same jet³ sholde up be take and usid,
And al this costelew outrage⁴ refusid.

Of Lancastre Duk Iohn, whos soule in
Hevene
I fully deme, and truste sit ful hye —
A noble prince I may allegge and nevene,⁵
(Other may no man of hym testifye) —
I never sy a lord that cowde hym gye⁶
Bet like his estat; al knyghtly prowesse
Was to hym girt: O God! his soule blisse!

His garnamentes weren noght ful wyde,
And yit thei hym becam wonderly wel. 100
Now wolde God the waast of cloth and
pryde
Y-put were in exyl perpetuel
For the good and profet universel.
And lordes myght helpe al this, if thei
wolde
The olde jet take, and it furth use and
holde.

Than myghte silver walke more thikke
Among the peple than that it doth now;
Ther wold I fayne that were y-set the
prikke,⁷ —

Nat for my self; I schal doo wel ynow, —
But, sone, for that swiche men as thow 110
That with the world wrastlen, myght han
plente
Of coyn, where as ye han now scarsetee.

Now hath thise lordes but litil neede of
broomes
To swepe away the filthe out of the street,
Syn syde sleeves of penylees gromes
Wile it up likke, be it drye or weet.
O Engeland! stand upryght on thy feet!
So foul a wast in so symple degree
Bannysshe! or sore it schal repente the.

BADBY'S HERESY⁸

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 41-47)

SOM man, for lak of occupacioun,
Museth forthir thanne his wyt may
strecche,
And, at the fendes instigacioun,
Dampnable errour holdeth, and can not
fleeche⁹
For no counseil ne reed, as dide a wrecche
Not fern¹⁰ agoo, whiche that of heresy
Convycet, and brent was un-to ashen
drye.

The precious body of oure lorde Jhesu
In forme of brede, he leved¹¹ not at
al;
He was in no thing abassht, ne eschu 10
To seye it was but brede material;
He seyde, a prestes power was as smal
As a rakers,¹² or swiche an other
wighte,
And to mak it, hadde no gretter
myght.

My lorde the prince¹³ — God him save
and blesse! —
Was at his deedly castigacioun,
And of his soule hadde grete tendernesse,
Thristyng sore his savacioun:
Grete was his pitous lamentacioun,
Whan that this renegat not wolde
blyne¹⁴ 20
Of the stynkyng errour that he was
inne.

⁸ John Badby was burned at Smithfield in 1410. This extract shows the feelings of a temperate, intelligent person regarding heresy.

⁹ escape. ¹⁰ long. ¹¹ believed. ¹² street-cleaner. ¹³ Prince Hal, later Henry V. ¹⁴ cease.

¹ sprinkled. ² very quickly. ³ fashion.
⁴ costly extravagance. ⁵ name. ⁶ guide. ⁷ aim.

This good lorde highte hym to be sweche
a mene¹

To his fader, oure lige lorde sovereyne,
If he renounce wolde his errour clene,
And come un-to oure good byleve ageyne,
He schulde of his lif seure ben and cer-
teyne,

And sufficient lyfode² eek scholde he
have,

Un-to the day he glad were in his grave.

Also this nobyl prince and worthy
knyght—

God quyte hym his charitable labour!—

Or any stikke kyndled were or light,³

The sacrament, oure blissed Saveoure,

With reverence grete and hye honoure

He fecche leet, this wrecche to con-
verte,

And make oure feithe to synkyn in his
herte.

But al for noght, it wolde not bytyde;

He heeld forth his oppynyoun dampnable,

And cast oure holy cristen feith a-syde,

As he that was to the fende acceptable.

By any outward tokyn resonable,⁴

If he inward hadde any repentaunce,

That wote he, that of no thing hath
doutaunce.

Lat the divines of hym speke and muse

Where his soule is by-come, or whider
gon;

Myn unkonynge of that me schal excuse,

Of whiche matere knowleche have I non.

But wolde God, tho Cristes foos echon

That as he heelde were i-served soo,

For I am seur that ther ben many
moos.

WOMAN'S SUPERIORITY

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 728-742)

THER is also a pees inordinat,

Whan the gretter obeith to the lesse;

And thus, whan to his soget³ a prelat
Obeyeth; and whan reson the blynd-
nesse

Sueth⁴ of sensualitees madnesse,

Obeying it: al swich pees is haynous,

For it is goode pees contrarious.

¹ Promised to be such an intermediary.

² livelihood. ³ subject. ⁴ Follows.

Right swich a pees, Adam had with Eve
Whan that he unto hir desire obeyde;

He was, per caas,⁵ adradde for to greve;¹⁰

Wherefor he did as that she to hym seide:

In that obedience he foleyde,⁶

For God hir him bytoke⁷ him to obeye;

But I adrad am that I thus fer seye;

If that this come unto the audience

Of women, I am sure I shal be shent:⁸

For that I touche of swich obedience,

Many a browe shal on me be bent;

Thei wolden waite to ben equipollent,⁹

And sumwhat more, unto hir hous-

bondis,²⁰

And sum men seyn swich vsage in this
lond is.

And it no wonder is, as semeth me,

Whan that I me bethought have al
about,

Thoght that women desiren sovereynte,

And hir housbondes make to hem loute;¹⁰

Thei made were of a ribbe, it is no doute,

Which more strong is, and substancial,

Than slyme of eerthe, and clenner ther-
withal.

Wherfor it semeth that the worthynesse

Of women, passyth mennes encer-
teyne;¹¹

And yit sum nyse¹² men, of lewdenesse,¹³

In repref of hem holden ther-a-geyn,

For crokid was that ribbe; and speke and
seyne,

That also crokid is hir curtaisie;

But agayn that, strongly wil I replie;

For in the writyng and in the scripture

Of philosophers, men may see and reede,

Cerely¹⁴ shap is most perfite figure,

Bitokenyng, in gemetrie, onhede;¹⁵

And crokydnesse a part is, that may lede

Sumwhat unto cerele or a cumpas:¹⁶

What so men seyen, women stonde in
gode caas.

For therby shewith it, that crokydnesse

Streccheth unto the gretter perfeccioun

Than doth a thing that is of evenesse;

Of this helpith no contradiecioun,

For it soth is; it is no fiecioun;

⁵ perchance. ⁶ did folly. ⁷ gave her to him.

⁸ undone. ⁹ of equal power. ¹⁰ bow. ¹¹ certainly.

¹² silly. ¹³ ignorance. ¹⁴ circular. ¹⁵ oneness.

Every perfit body that man kan nevene,
Is rounde and crokyd, and noght
streghte ne evene.

Bygynne first at Heven, and rounde it is; 50
The sonne and mone, and the sterres also;
Hed of man, then mouth, and hert, I-wisse,
Ben alle rounde; and othir ben ther moo
Than I expresse as now; but or I goo,
Yit shal I bet wommannes part sustene;
So biddeth pees, and that to folwe I
mene.

Now for to speke or touchen of the place
In which that man and womman fourmed
were:
Almyghty God to womman shope swich
grace,
That she was formed in the worthier; 60
In Paradys men wot wel he made here;
But man ymade was out of Paradys,
In place of lesse worthinesse and prys.

And of the maner of formacioun
Of bothe two herkenh now wel I prey;
The token or the signifiacioun
Of making of Adam, may be no way
Strecche to so perfyte a goode, I say,
As side the formacioun of Eve;
And that as swithe here I schal it
preve. 70

For more have I for hir partye yit:
Making of Eve tokned the making
Of holy chirche, and sacramentes of it;
As of the syde of Adam, him slepyng,
Eve was made, so our lorde Crist deyng
Upon the crois, holy chirche of his syde,
And the sacramentes, made were in
that yde.

From tyme eeke Crist was of xii yere age
Unto thritty, he with his modir ay
Was serving hir with right plesant corage;
To teche humilite, he tooke the way 81
Fro Heven hiddir, and mekenesse verray
Taught he, the moste partie of his lyf,
Whil he was with his modir and his
wyfe;

For she was bothe two; and syn she had
So long of hir housbonde the maystrie,
Women, I trowe, be nat now so mad
That style to forgo; nay, swich folye,
What man that can in a woman espye,

Is worthi shryned be; God save hem
alle, 90
And graunt hir hye corage nat to palle!

Holy writ seith, 'If women sovereynte
Of hir housbondes have, how that thei
Unto housbondes contrarious be:'
The text is such, I woot wel, but what
thei? 1
That text I undirstonde thus alwey:
Whan that housbondes hem mystake
and erre,
Ageyn that vice wyves maken werre.

Thogh a woman hir housbonde contrarie
In his oppynyoun erroneous, 100
Shul men for that deme hir his adversarie?
Straw! be he never so harrageous, 2
If he and she shul dwellen in on house,
Goode is he suffre; therby pees may
spring;
Housbondes pees is pesible suffryng.

TRIBUTES TO CHAUCER AND GOWER

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 267, 280-283, 297-301, 712-716)

'WHAT schal I calle the? What is thi
name?'

'Hoccleve, fadir myn, men clepen me.'
'Hoccleve, sone?' 'I-wis, fadir, that
same.'

'Sone, I have herd, or this, men speke
of the;

Thou were aqueynted with Caucher, 3
pardee—

God have his soule best of any wyght!—
Sone, I wole holde the that I have
hyght.' 4

'With hert as tremblyng as the leef of
aspe, 5

Fadir, syn 6 ye me rede 7 to do so,
Of my symple conceyt wole I the claspe 10
Undo, and lat it at his large go. 8
But weylaway! so is myn herte wo,

That the honour of Englyssh tonge is
deed,

Of which I wont was han 9 consail and
reed.

1 though. 2 violent. 3 Chaucer. 4 what I have
promised. 5 aspen. 6 since. 7 counsel. 8 let it
go free. 9 to have.

'O, maister deere, and fadir reverent !
 Mi maister Chaucer, flour of eloquence,
 Mirour of fructuous entendement,¹
 O, universel fadir in science !
 Allas ! that thou thyn excellent prudence
 In thi bed mortel mightist nacht by-
 qwethe; ²⁰
 What eiled Deth ? Allas ! whi wolde he
 sle the ?

'O Deth ! thou didest nacht harme sin-
 guleer
 In slaghtere of him; but al this land it
 smertith;
 But nathelees, yit hast thou no power
 His name sle; his hy vertu astertith ²
 Unslayn fro the, which ay us lyfly hertyth,³
 With bookes of his ornat endytyng,
 That is to al this land enlumynyng.

'Hast thou nat eeke my maister Gower
 slayn,
 Whos vertu I am insufficient ³⁰
 For to descreyve ? I wrote wel in certayn,
 For to sleen al this world thou haast
 yment;
 But syn our lorde Crist was obedient
 To the, in feith I can no further seye;
 His creatures mosten the obeye.'

Simple is my goost, and scars my let-
 ture,⁴
 Unto your excellence for to write
 Myn inward love, and yit in aventure
 Wyle I me putte, thogh I can but lyte.
 Mi dere maistir — God his soule quyte ! —
 And fadir, Chaucer, fayn wolde han
 me taght; ⁴¹
 But I was dul, and lerned lite or nacht.

Allas ! my worthi maister honorable,
 This landes verray tresor and richesse,
 Deth, by thi deth, hath harme irreparable
 Unto us doon; hir vengeable duresse ⁵
 Despoiled hath this land of the swet-
 nesse
 Of rethorik; for un-to Tullius
 Was never man so lyk a-monges us.

Also, who was hier⁶ in philosophie ⁵⁰
 To Aristotle, in our tonge, but thou ?
 The steppes of Virgile in poesie

¹ beneficial understanding, intelligence.
² escapes. ³ always heartens us vigorously.
⁴ learning. ⁵ cruelty. ⁶ heir.

Thow filwedist⁷ eeke. Men wot wel
 y-now
 That combre-world that the, my mai-
 stir, slow.

Wold I slayn were ! Deth was to hastyf
 To renne on the, and reve the thi lyf.

Deth hath but smal consideracioun
 Unto the vertuous, I have espied,
 No more, as shewith the probacioun,
 Than to a vicious maistir losel tried;⁸ ⁶⁰
 A-mong an heep, every man is maistried
 With hire, as wel the porre as is the
 riche;
 Lered and lewde eeke standen al
 y-liche.

She myghte han taried hir vengeance
 awhile,
 Til that sum man had egal to the be.
 Nay, lat be that ! sche knew wel that this
 yle
 May never man forth brynge lyk to the,
 And hir office needes do mot she;
 God bad hir so, I truste as for thi
 beste; ⁶⁹
 O maister, maister, God thi soule restel !

The firste fyndere of our faire langage,
 Hath seyde in caas semblable, and othir
 moo,
 So hily wel, that it is my dotage
 For to expresse or touche any of thoo.⁹
 Alasse ! my fadir fro the worlde is goo —
 My worthi maister Chaucer, hym I
 mene —
 Be thou advoket for hym, hevenes
 quene !

As thou wel knowest, o blissid virgyne,
 With lovyng hert and hye devocioun ⁷⁹
 In thyne honour he wroot ful many a lyne;
 O now thine helpe and thi promocioun,
 To God thi sone make a mocoun,
 How he thi servaunt was, mayden
 Marie,
 And lat his love floure and fructifie.

Al-though his lyfe be queynt,¹⁰ the resem-
 blance
 Of him hath in me so fressh lyflynesse,
 That, to putte othir men in remembrance

⁷ didst follow.
⁸ one proved a vicious master rascal.
⁹ those. ¹⁰ quenched.

Of his persone, I have heere his lyknesse
 Do make, to this ende in sothfastnesse,
 That thei that have of him lest thought
 and mynde,⁹⁰
 By this peynture may ageyn him fynde.¹

The ymages that in the chirche been,
 Maken folk thenke on God and on his
 seyntes,
 Whan the ymages thei be-holden and seen;
 Were² oft unsyte³ of hem causith re-
 streyntes
 Of thoughtes gode: whan a thing depeynt
 is,
 Or entailed,⁴ if men take of it heede,
 Thought of the lyknesse it wil in hem
 brede.

Yit somme holden oppynyoun, and sey
 That none ymages schuld I-maked be: ¹⁰⁰
 Thei erren foule, and goon out of the wey;
 Of trouth have thei scant sensibilate.
 Passe over that: now, blessid Trinite,
 Uppon my maistres soule, mercy have,
 For him, Lady, eke thi mercy I crave.

ROUNDEL TO SOMER THE CHANCELLOR

THE sonne, with his bemes of brightnesse,
 To man so kyndly is, and norissynge,
 That lakkyng it day nere but dirknesse:
 To day he yeveth his enlumynyng,
 And causith al fruyt for to wexe and
 sprynge:

Now, syn that sonne may so moche avail,
 And moost with Somer is his sojournynge,
 That sesoun bounteous we wole assaill.

Glad-cheerid Somer, to your governaille
 And grace we submitte al our wyllynge! ¹⁰
 To whom yee frendly been he may nat faille
 But he shal have his reasonable axynge:
 Aftir your good lust,⁵ be the sesonyng
 Of our fruytes this laste Mighelmesse,
 The tyme of yeer was of our seed ynnynge,⁶
 The lak of which is our greet hevynesse.

We truste up-on your frendly gentillesse,
 Ye wole us helpe and been our supportaille.
 Now yeve us cause ageyn this Cristemesse

For to be glad, o lord, whethir our taille ⁷ ²⁰
 Shal soone make us with our shippes saille
 To port salut. If yow list we may synge;
 And elles, moot us bothe mourn and
 waille,
 Till your favour us sende releevynge.

We, your servantes, Hoccleve and Baillay,
 Hethe and Offorde, yow beseeche and
 preye,
 Haasteth our hervest as soone as yee may!
 For fere of stormes our wit is aweye;
 Were our seed inned wel we mighten pleye,
 And us desporte and synge and make
 game,³⁰
 And yit this rowndel shul we synge and
 seye
 In trust of yow and honour of your name.

Somer, that rypest mannes sustenance
 With holsum hete of the sonnes warm-
 nesse,
 Al kynde of man thee holden is to blesse!

Ay thankid be thy frendly governance,
 And thy fressh look of mirthe and of glad-
 nesse!

Somer etc.

To hevvy folk of thee the remembraunce
 Is salve and oynement to hir seeknesse.
 For why we thus shul synge in Christe-
 messe,⁴⁰

Somer etc.

BALADE TO MY GRACIOUS LORD OF YORK⁸

Go, little pamflet, and streight thee dresse
 Unto the noble rootid gentillesse
 Of the myghty Prince of famous honour,
 My gracious Lord of York, to whose
 noblesse

Me recommande with hertes humblesse,
 As he that have his grace and his favour
 Fownden alway; for which I am dettour
 For him to preye; and so shal my sym-
 plesse

Hertily do unto my dethes hour.

Remembre his worthynesse, I charge thee, ¹⁰
 How ones at London, desired he,
 Of me that am his servant, and shal ay,

⁷ tally.

⁸ The father of Edward IV.

¹ Here follows the famous portrait of Chaucer.

² Where, whereas. ³ not seeing. ⁴ carved.
⁵ pleasure. ⁶ harvest, i.e. payment.

To have of my balades swich plentee
 As ther weren remeynyng unto me;
 And for nat wole I to his wil seyn nay,
 But fulfille it as ferforth as I may,
 Be thow an owter ¹ of my nycetee,²
 For my good lordes lust, and game, and play.

My lord beseeke eek in humble maneere,
 That he nat souffre thee for to appeere ²⁰
 In th'onourable sighte, or the presence,
 Of the noble Princesse and lady deere,
 My gracious lady, my good lordes feere,³
 The mirour of wommanly excellence.
 Thy cheer is naght, ne haast noon eloquence
 To moustre ⁴ thee before hir yen cleere:
 For myn honour were holsum thyn absence.⁵

Yit ful fayn wolde I have a messageer
 To recomande me, with herte enter,
 To hir benigne and humble wommanbede; ³⁰
 And at the tyme have I noon othir heer
 But thee; and smal am I, for thee, the
 neer,⁶

And if thow do it nat, than shal that dede
 Be left and that nat kepte I, out of drede.
 My lord, nat I, shal have of thee poweer.
 Axe him a licence; upon him crie and
 grede!⁷

Whan that thow hast thus doon, than aftir-
 ward

Byseeche thou that worthy Prince Edward,
 That he thee leye apart for what may
 tyde,

Lest thee beholde my Maister Picard. ⁴⁰
 I warne thee that it shal be full hard
 For thee and me to halte on any syde,
 But he espie us. — Yit, no force,⁸ abyde!
 Let him looke on; his herte is to me-ward
 So frendly that our shame wole he hyde.

If that I in my wrytynge foleye,⁹
 As I do ofte (I can it nat withseye),
 Meetrynge amis ¹⁰ or speke unfittyngly,
 Or nat by just peys ¹¹ my sentences weye,
 And nat to the ordre of endytyng obeye, ⁵⁰
 And my colours ¹² sette ofte sythe awry, —
 With al myn herte wole I buxumly,
 It to amende and to correct, him preye;
 For undir his correccioun stande y.

Thow foul book, unto my lorde seye also,
 That pryde is unto me so greet a fo,
 That the spectacle forbedith he me,¹³
 And hath y-doon of tyme yore ago;
 And for my sighte blyve ¹⁴ hastith me fro,
 And lakkyth that that sholde his comfort
 be, ⁶⁰

No wonder thogh thow have no beautee.
 Out upon pryde, causer of my wo!
 My sighte is hurt thurgh hir adversitee.

Now ende I thus. The holy Trinitee,
 And our Lady, the blissid mayden free,
 My lord and lady have in governance!
 And graunte hem joie and hy prosperitee,
 Nat to endure oonly two yer or three,
 But a thousand! and if any plesance
 Happe mighte, on my poore souffissance, ⁷⁰
 To his prowesse and hir benignitee,
 My lyves ioie it were, and sustenance!
 Cest tout.

THE COMPLAINT

THE PROLOG

AFTER that hervest inned had his sheves,
 And that the broune season of Myhelmesse
 Was come, and gan the trees robbe of ther
 leves,

That grene had bene and in lusty fressh-
 nesse,

And them in-to colowre of yelownesse
 Hadd dyen and doune throwne undar foote,
 That chaunge sank into myne herte roote.

For freshly brought it to my remem-
 braunce,

That stablenes in this worlde is there none;
 There is no thinge but chaunge and vari-
 aunce; ¹⁰

How welthe a man be, or well begone,¹⁵
 Endure it shall not; he shall it forgon.
 Deathe under fote shall hym thrist adowne:
 That is every wites conclusyon.¹⁶

Whiche for to weyve ¹⁷ is in no mannes
 myght,

How riche he be, stronge, lusty, freshe, and
 gay.

And in the ende of Novembar, upon a
 nyght,

¹³ Will not let me wear spectacles. Hoccleve mentions them again in his poem *To Sir John Oldcastle*, l. 417.

¹⁴ swiftly. ¹⁵ situated. ¹⁶ man's end. ¹⁷ avoid.

¹ utterer. ² folly. ³ companion, mate. ⁴ show.

⁵ Thy absence would be good for my honor.

⁶ little the nearer. ⁷ call. ⁸ no matter.

⁹ utter folly. ¹⁰ making false metre.

¹¹ weight, poise. ¹² rhetorical decorations.

Syghenge sore as I in my bed lay,
 For this and othar thougths, whiche many
 a day
 Before I toke, sleape came none in myne
 eye,
 So vexyd me the thougthfull maladye.

I see well, sythen I with sycknes¹ last
 Was scourged, clowdy hath bene the fa-
 voure

That shone on me full bright in tymes past;
 The sonne abatid and the derke showre
 Hildyd² downe right on me; and in langour
 He made me swyme, so that my wite
 To lyve no lust hadd, ne no delyte.

The grefe abowte my harte so sore swal,³
 And bolned⁴ ever to and to so sore,
 That nedes oute I muste there-with-all;
 I thought I nolde it kepe cloos no more,
 Ne lett it in me for to olde and hore;⁵
 And for to preve I cam of a woman,
 I brast oute on the morowe and thus began.

*(Here endythe my prologe and folowythe my
 complaynt.)*

Allmyghty God as lykethe his goodnes,
 Visytethe folks alday as men may se,
 With lose of good and bodily sikenese,
 And amonge othar he forgot not me;
 Witnes upon⁶ the wyld infirmyte⁷
 Which that I had, as many a man well
 knewe,
 And whiche me owt of my selfe cast and
 threw.

It was so knowen to the people and kouthe,
 That counsell⁸ was it none, ne none be
 myghte.

How it with me stode was in every mans
 mowthe,

And that full sore my fryndes affrighte.
 They for myne helthe pilgrimages highte,⁹
 And sowght them, some on hors and some
 on foote, —

God yelde it them — to geten me my bote.¹⁰

But althowghe the substaunce of my mem-
 ory

Wente to pley as for a certayne space,
 Yet the Lorde of Vertew, the Kyng of
 Glory,

¹ The insanity spoken of below.

² swelled.

³ As is shown by.

⁴ secret.

⁵ raged.

⁶ promised.

⁷ His insane fit.

⁸ cure.

⁹ Poured.

¹⁰ grow old and hoary.

¹¹ before.

¹² countenance.

¹³ hesitation.

¹⁴ in great straits.

¹⁵ stingy.

Of his highe myght and his benyng
 grace,
 Made it to returne into the place
 Whennes it cam; whiche at all-hallwe-
 messe,
 Was five yeere, neyther more ne lesse.

And evere sythen — thanked be God owr
 Lord

Of his good reconsiliacion, —
 My wyt and I have bene of such accorde
 As we were or¹¹ the alteracion
 Of it was. But by my savacion,
 Sith that tyme have I be sore sett on fire,
 And lyved in great torment and martire;

For though that my wit were home come
 agayne,

Men wolde it not so understood or take;
 With me to deale hadden they dysdayne;
 A ryotows person I was and forsake;
 Myn olde frindshipec was all ovarshake;
 No wyte withe me lyst make daliance;
 The worlde me made a straunge con-
 tinance.¹²

70

HOCCLEVE'S GAY YOUTH

(La Male Regle, §§ 16-26)

THE outward signe of Bachus and his lure,
 That at his dore hangith day by day
 Excitith folk to taaste of his moisture
 So often that man can nat wel seyen nay.
 For me, I seye I was enclyned ay
 Withouten daunger¹³ thidir for to hye me.
 But if swich charge upon my bake lay,
 That I moot it forbere as for a tyme;

Or but I were nakidly bystad¹⁴
 By force of the penylees maladie,
 For thanne in herte kowde I nat be glad,
 Ne lust had noon to Bachus hows to hie.
 Fy! Lak of coyn departith conpaignie;
 And hevye purs, with herte liberal,
 Qwenchith the thirsty hete of hertes drie,
 Wher chynchy¹⁵ herte hath therof but
 smal.

I dar nat telle how that the fresshe repeer
 Of Venus femel lusty children deere,
 That so goodly, so shaply were, and feir,
 And so pleasant of port and of maneere,

¹¹ before.

¹² countenance.

¹³ hesitation.

¹⁴ in great straits.

¹⁵ stingy.

And feede cowden al a world with cheere,
And of atyr passyngly wel byseye,¹
At Poules Heed me maden ofte appeere,
To talks of mirthe and to disporte and
pleye.

Ther was sweet wyn ynow thurghout the
hous,

And wafres thikke, for this conpaignie
That I spak of been sumwhat likerous,²
Where as they mowe a'draght of wyn espie,
Sweete and in wirkyng hoot for the mais-
trie³

To warme a stomak with, thereof they
dranke.³⁰

To suffre hem paie had been no courtesie:
That charge I tooke to wynne love and
thanke.

Of loves aart yit touchid I no deed;
I cowde nat and eek it was no neede:
Had I a kus I was content ful weel,
Bette than I wolde han be with the deede:
Ther-on can I but smal, it is no dreede:⁴
Whan that men speke of it in my presence:
For shame I wexe as reed as is the gleede.⁵
Now wole I torne ageyn to my sentence.⁴⁰

Of him that hauntith taverne of custume,
At shorte wordes the profyt is this:
In double wyse his bagge it shal consume,
And make his tonge speke of folk amis;
For in the cuppe seelden fownden is
That any wight his neigheburgh commend-
ith.

Beholde and see what avantage is his,
That God, his freend, and eek himself,
offendith.

But oon avauntage in this cas I have:
I was so ferd with any man to fighte,⁵⁰
Cloos kept I me; no man durst I deprave⁶
But rownyngly,⁷ I spak no thyng on highte.

¹ provided.

² excellent, sovereign.

³ speak slightingly of.

⁴ fond of good fare.

⁵ doubt. ⁶ glowing coal.

⁷ whispering.

And yit my wil was good, if that I mighte,
For lettynge of my manly cowardyse,
That ay of strookes impressid the wighte,⁸
So that I durste medlen in no wyse.

Wher was a gretter maister eek than y,
Or bet aqweyntid at Westmynstre yate,
Among the taverneres namely,
And cookes whan I cam eerly or late? ⁶⁰
I pynchid⁹ nat at hem in myn acate,¹⁰
But paid hem as that they axe wolde;
Wherefore I was the welcomere algate,¹¹
And for a verray gentil man y-holde.

And if it happid on the someres day
That I thus at the taverne hadde be,
Whan I departe sholde and go my way
Hoom to the privee seel,¹² so wowed me
Heete and unlust and superfluitee ⁶⁹
To walke unto the brigge and take a
boot,

That nat durste I contrarie hem all three,
But did as that they stired me, God woot.

And in the wyntir, for the way was deep,
Unto the brigge I dressid me also,
And ther the bootmen took upon me
keep,¹³

For they my riot¹⁴ kneewen fern ago:
With hem was I i-tugged to and fro,
So wel was him that I with wolde fare;
For riot paieth largely everemo;
He styntith nevere til his purs be bare. ⁸⁰

Othir than 'maistir' callid was I nevere,
Among this meynne,¹⁵ in myn audience.
Me thoughte I was y-maad a man for evere:
So tikelid me that nyce reverence,
That it me made larger of despense
Than that I thought han been o flateriel
The guyse of thy traiterous diligence
Is, folk to mescheef haasten and to hie.

⁸ Which impressed [on me] the weight of strokes.

⁹ quibble as to price. ¹⁰ purchasing.

¹¹ always. ¹² The office of the Privy Seal.

¹³ paid attention to me. ¹⁴ extravagance.

¹⁵ servile throng.

JOHN LYDGATE

THE CHURL AND THE BIRD¹

PROBLEMS of olde likenesse and figures,
Whiche proved been fructuous of sentence,²
And hath auctorite grownded in scriptures,
By resemblaunces of nobile apparence,
Withe moralites concluding of prudence,
Like as the Bibylle rehersithe by writing,
How trees somtyme chase³ hemself a kyng.

First in their choise thay named the olive,
To reigne amonge hem, Judicum⁴ dothe ex-
presse,

But he hym dide excuse blyve,⁵ 10
He myght not forsake his fatnesse,
Ner the figge tree his amorows swetnes,
Ner the vyne his holsom fressh tarage,⁶
Whiche yeveth comforte to al maner age.

And semlably⁷ poetis laureate,
By dyrke parables ful convenient,
Feyne that birddis and bests of estate,
As royale egles and lyons be assent,
Sent out writtes to olde⁸ a parliament,
And made decres brefly for to saye, 20
Some for to have lordshippe and some for
obeye.

Egles in the heyre⁹ highest to take hir
flighte,
Power of lyouns on the grounde is sene,
Cedre among trees highest of sight,
And the laurealle of nature is ay grene;
Of flowres also Flora goddes and quene;
Thus of al thing ther beene diversites,
Some of estate and some of lowe degrees.

Poetes writin wonderfulle liknesses,
And under covert kepe hemself ful close;
They take bestis and fowles to witnesse, 31
Of whos feyninges fabilles first arosse.
And here I cast unto my purpose,

¹ A favorite Old-French tale, perhaps of oriental origin. See J. O. Halliwell's remarks in his edition of Lydgate's Minor Poems, Percy Soc., vol. II, p. 179, whence our text.

² fruitful in teaching. ³ chase. ⁴ Judges, ix. ⁵ at once. ⁶ flavor. ⁷ similarly. ⁸ hold. ⁹ air.

Out of the Frenssh a tale to translate,
Whiche in a paunflet I redde and saw but
late.

This tale whiche I make of mencionn,
In gros reherseth playnly to declare,
Thre proverbis payed for raunsoun,
Of a faire birdde that was take out of a
snare,

Wondir desirous to scape out of hir care, 40
Of my autour folwyng the processe,
So as it fel, in order I shal expresse.

Whilom ther was in a smal village,
As myn autor makethe rehersayle,
A chorle¹⁰ whiche hadde lust and a grete
corage,¹¹

Within hymself be diligent travayle
To array his gardeyn withe notable appar-
ayle,
Of lengthe and brede yeliche¹² square and
longe,
Hegged and dyked to make it sure and
strong. 49

Alle the aleis were made playne with sond,
The benches turned with newe turvis
grene,

Sote herbers,¹³ withe condite¹⁴ at the honde,
That wellid up agayne the sonne shene,
Lyke silver stremes as any cristale clene,
The burly waves in up boyling,
Rounde as byralle ther beamys outshynynge.

Amyddis the gardeyn stode a fressh lawrer,¹⁵
Theron a bird syngyng bothe day and
nyghte,

With shynnyng fedres brightar than the
golde weere,¹⁶

Whiche with hir song made hevy hertes
lighte, 60

That to beholde it was an heavenly sighte,
How toward evyn and in the daw[e]nyng,
She ded her payne most amourosly to
syng.

¹⁰ churl, boor. ¹¹ inclination. ¹² alike. ¹³ Sweet arbore. ¹⁴ fountain. ¹⁵ laurel. ¹⁶ wire.

Esperus enforced hir corage,¹
 Toward evyn whan Phebus gan to west,
 Amid² the braunches to hir avauntage
 To syng hir complyn³ and than go to rest;
 And at the rysing of the quene Alcest,⁴
 To syng agayne, as was hir due,
 Erly on morowe the day sterre to salve. 70

It was a verray heavenly melodye,
 Evyne and morowe to here the byrddis
 songe,
 And the soote sugred armonye,
 Of uncouth⁵ warblys and tunys drawn on
 longe,
 That al the gardeyne of the noyse rong,
 Til on a morwe, whan Tytan shone ful clere,
 The birdd was trapped and kaute with a
 pantere.⁶

The chorle was gladde that he this birdde
 hadde take,
 Mery of chere, of looke, and of visage;
 And in al haste he cast for to make, 80
 Within his house a pratie litelle cage,
 And with hir songe to rejoise his corage,
 Til at the last the sely birdde abrayed,⁷
 And sobirly unto the chorle she sayde.

'I am now take and stand undir daunger,⁸
 Holde straite that I may not fle.
 Adien, my songe and alle notes clere,
 Now that I have lost my liberte;
 Now am I thralle that somtyme was fre,
 And trust while I stand in distresse, 90
 I canne not syng ner make gladnesse.

'And thowe my cage forged were with
 golde,
 And the pynacles of birrale and cristale,
 I remembre a proverd said of olde,
 "Who lesethe his fredam, in faith! he
 loseth all;"
 For I hadd levyr upon a braunche smale,
 Mekely to singe amonge the wodes grene,
 Than in a cage of silver brighte and shene.

'Songe and prison have noon accordaunce;
 Trowest thou I woile syng in prisoun? 100

¹ Hesperus prompted her.

² Halliwell reads *And*, but the emendation seems to be required by the sense.

³ compline, last service of the day.

⁴ Alcestes is here a constellation of the dawn. In Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (Prol. A 507) she is the daisy (day's eye). Cf. Schick's note to l. 70 of *The Temple of Glas*.

⁵ rare. ⁶ large bird-net. ⁷ started up. ⁸ control.

Song procedethe of joy and of pleasaunce,
 And prison causethe dethe and destruc-
 cioun;

Ryngyng of fetires makethe no mery
 sounde,

Or how shuld he be gladde or jocounde
 Agayne his wylle, that ligthe in chayn⁹
 bounde?

'What avaylethe it a lyon to be kyng
 Of bestes, alle shette in a towre of stone?
 Or an egle, undir straye keepyng,
 Called also king of fowles everichone?
 Fy on lordshippe whan liberte is gone! 110
 Answers herto and lat it not asterte,⁹
 Who syngeth merily that syngeth not of
 herte?

'But if thou wylte rejoise of my syngyng,
 Lat me go flye free from al daunger;
 And every day in the mornyng,
 I shall repayre unto thi lawrer,
 And freshly syng withe lusty notes clere,
 Undir thy chambire or afore thyne halle,
 Every season whane thou list me calle.

'To be shett up and pynned undir drede,
 No thing accordethe unto my nature, 121
 Thouhe I were fedde with mylke and
 wastelbrede,¹⁰

And soote cruddes¹¹ browte unto my pasture,
 Yet had I lever to do my besy cure,
 Herly in the morowe to shrapyn¹² in the
 vale,

To fynde my dyner amonge the wormes
 smale.

'The laborare is gladdare at his ploughe,
 Herly on morne to fede hym withe bacon,
 Than som man is that hathe tresour
 i-noughe,

And of alle deyntes plente and foison,¹³ 11
 And no fredom with his possessioun
 To go at large, but as bere to stake¹⁴
 To passe his boundis but if he leve take.

'Take this aunswere for full conclusion —
 To syng in prison thou shalt me not con-
 strayne,
 Till I have fredom in wodis up and downe,
 To flien at large on boughes rouhe¹⁵ and
 playne;

⁹ escape, be avoided. ¹⁰ The finest sort of bread.

¹¹ sweet curds. ¹² scrape. ¹³ abundance.

¹⁴ a bear bound to a stake. ¹⁵ rough.

And of resoun thou shuldest not disdayne,
Of my desire laugh and have game;¹
But who is a chorle wolde eche a² man were
the same.' 140

'Wele,' quod the chorle, 'syth it will not be
That I desire as be³ thy talkyng,
Magry⁴ thi will thou shalt chese on of thre:⁵
Withinne a cage merily to syng,
Or to the kechen I shal thy body bringe,
Pulle thi fedris that bene so bright and
clere,
And aftir the rooste and baake to my
dyner.'

'Than,' quod the birdde, 'to reson saye
not nay,
Towching my songe a fulle aunswer thou
haste;
And when my fedres pulled been away, 150
Yf I be rosted, outhir bake in paste,
Thou shalt of me have a fulle smal repaste;
But yf thou wilt werke by my counseille,
Thou mayest by me have passing gret
availle.'⁶

'Yf thou wil unto my rede assent,
And suffre me go frely fro prisoun,
Without raunsoun or any other rent,
I shal the yeve a notable gret gwerdoun,
Thre grete wysdoms according to reson,
More of valewe, take hede what I do
profre, 160
Thane all the golde that is shet in thi cofre.

'Trust me wele I shal the not disceyve.'
'Wele,' quod the chorle, 'telle oon, anone
let se.'
'Nay,' quod the byrdde, 'thou must afore
conceyve,
Who that shal teche must of reason go free;
It sittethe a maister to have his liberte,
And at large to teche his lesson.
Have me not suspecte, I mene no tresone.'

'Well,' quod the chorle, 'I holde me con-
tent,
I trust the promys which thou hast made
to me.' 170
The birdde fley forth, the chorle was of
assent;

And toke hir flight upon the lawreer tre.
Than thought she thus, 'Now I stand fre,
With snares panteres I cast⁷ not al my
lyve,
Ner withe no lyme-twygges any more to
stryve.

'He is a fole that scaped is daunger,
And broken his fedres⁸ and fled is fro
prisoun,
For to resorte,⁹ for brent childe dredethe
fire.
Eche a man beware of wisdom and resoun,
Of sugre strowed that hydethe fals poyson;
Ther is no venome so parlious in sharp-
nes, 180
As whan it hathe of treacle¹⁰ a lyknes.

'Who dredeth no parelle,¹¹ in parelle he
shal falle;
Smothe waters ben ofte sithes depe;
The quayle-pype can moste falsly calle,
Till the quayle undir the net doth crepe;
A blery-eed fowler trust not though he wepe;
Eschewe his thombe, of weping take noon
hede,
That smale birddes can nype be the hede.

'And now that I such daungers am escaped,
I wil be ware and afore provide, 190
That of no fowler I wil no more be japed,¹²
From their lyme-twygges I will flee fer
asyde;
Where perell is, gret perelle is to abyde. —
Come nere, thou chorle, take hede to my
speeche,
Of thre wisdomes that I shal the teche.

'Yeve not of wisdom to hasty credence
To every tale nor to eche tyding;
But conside of resoun and prudence,
Among many talis is many gret lesyng; 200
Hasty credence hath caused gret hyndring;
Reporte of talis, and tydings broute up
newe,
Makethe many a man to beholde untrew.

'For oon partie take this for thy raunsoun:
Lerne the secund grownded in scripture,
Desire thou nott be no condicioun
Thing which is impossible to recure; 14
Wordly desires stand alle in adventure,

¹ Nor laugh to scorn my desire. ² every.

³ "That which I desire concerning." ⁴ Maugre.

⁵ Why "three"? Possibly "thre" should be "the," these. But we have three returns offered by the bird presently. ⁶ use.

⁷ reckon. ⁸ For "fetres," fetters? ⁹ return.

¹⁰ medicinal syrup. ¹¹ peril. ¹² deceived. ¹³ lie.

¹⁴ obtain.

And who desire to clymbe highe on lofte,
By soden torne felethe ofte his fal unsoft.

'The thirdde is this; beware bothe even
and morowe, ²¹¹
Forgete it not, but lerne this of me:
For tresoure loste maketh never to gret
sorowe,
Which ¹ in no wise may not recovered be;
For who takthe sorowe for losse in that
degre,
Reknethe first his losse and aftir rekyn his
payne,
And of oon sorowe makethe he sorowes
tweyne.'

Aftir this lessone the birdde begane a songe,
Of hir escape gretly rejoysing,
And she remembryng also the wronge ²²⁰
Don by the chorle first at hir takynge,
Of hir affray and hir enprisonyng;
Gladde that she was at large and out of
drede,
Said unto hym, hovyng ² above his hedde:

'Thou were,' quod she, 'a very naturall
fole
To suffre me departe of thy lewdnesse;³
Thou oughtest oft to complayne and make
dole,
And in thyne herte to have gret hevynesse,
That thou hast loste so passing gret richesse,
Whiche myght suffice, by valewe in rek-
enyng, ²³⁰
To pay the raunsum of a myghty kyng.

'There is a stone whiche called is jagounce,⁴
Of olde engendered withinne myne en-
trayle,
Whiche of fyne golde peyssethe⁵ a gret
unce,⁶
Cytryne⁷ of colour, lyke garnettes of en-
tayle,⁸
Which maketh men victorious in batayle,
And so⁹ ever bere on hym this stone
Is fully assured agayne his mortal foone.

'Who hathe this stone in possession,
Shal suffre no povert, ner no indigence, ²⁴⁰
But of al tresour have plente and foyssoun,
And every man shal do hym reverence;
And no ennemy shal do hym offence.

But from thyne handis now that I am
gone,
Pleyne if thou wilt, for thi parte is none.

'It causeth love, it makethe men more
gracious
And favorable in every mannys sight;
It makethe accorde betwne folke envious,
Comforteth sorowfull, and maketh heavy
herttes lighte;
Lyke topasion¹⁰ of colours sonnyssh bright;
I am a foole to telle al at ones, ²⁵¹
Or to teche a chorle the price of precious
stones.

'Men shuld not put a precious margarite,¹¹
As rubies, saphires, or othir stones hynde,¹²
Emeraudes ner¹³ rounde perles whight,
To fore rude swyne that loven d[r]affe¹⁴
of kynde;
For a sowe delightethe, as I fynde,
More in foule draffe hir pigges for to glade,
That in al the perre¹⁵ that comethe out of
Garnade.¹⁶

'Eche thing draueth unto his semlable,¹⁷ ²⁶⁰
Fysshes on the see, bestes on the stronde,
The eyere for fowllis of nature is conven-
able,
To a ploughe man to tille the lande,
And a chorle a mokeforke¹⁸ in his hande;
I lese my tyme ony more to tarye,
To telle a bowen¹⁹ of the lapidarye.²⁰

'That thou haddest, thou gettest never
agayne;
Thi lym-twigges and panthers I defye:
To lete me go thou ware foule over sayne,²¹
To lese thi richesse only of foly. ²⁷⁰
I am now fre to syng, and to flye
Where that me lust, and he is a foole at alle,²²
That gothe at large and makethe himselff
thralle.

'To here a wisdom thyn eres been half
deef,
Lyke an asse that listithe on an harppe;
Thou mayst go pype in an yve-leffe;
Better is to me to syng on thornes sharppe,
Than in a cage withe a chorle to carppe:²³

¹ The antecedent of *which* is *tresoure*. ³ poisoning.
² Ignorance. ⁴ a kind of gem. ⁵ weighs. ⁶ ounce.
⁷ yellow. ⁸ cut. ⁹ "Who" is perhaps lost before *so*.

¹⁰ topaz. ¹¹ gem. ¹² refined, gentle. ¹³ nor.
¹⁴ swill. ¹⁵ jewelry. ¹⁶ Granada? ¹⁷ Birds
of a feather flock together. ¹⁸ dungfork. ¹⁹ For
"bowen," i.e. boor? Cf. "boueer" below. ²⁰ treatise
on gems. ²¹ it was a great oversight in thee. ²² in
all ways. ²³ converse, wrangle.

For it was saide of folkes yore a gone,
A chorles chorle is ofte wo begone.' 280

The chorle felt his hert parte in twayne,
For verray sorowe, and a-sondire ryve;
'Allas I' quod he, 'I may wele wepe and
playne,
As a wreche never leke¹ to thryve,
But for to endure in poverte al my live;
For of foly and of wilfulnesse,
I have now lost al holy my richesse.

'I was a lorde, I crye out of² fortune,
And hadde gret tresoure late in my kep-
ing,
Whiche myghte have made me long to con-
tynue, 290
Withe that stone to have lyved leke a
kyng;
Yf that I hadde sett it in a ryng,
Borne it on me, I hadde had goode i-nowe,
And never more have neded to goon to the
ploughe.'

Whan the birdde sawe the chorle thus
morne,
And houghe³ that he was hevy of his chere,
She toke hir flighte and gayn⁴ a-gayne re-
torne
Towards hym, and said as ye shal here;—
'O dul chorle wysdoms for to lere!
That I the taughte, al is lefte behynde, 300
Raked away and clene out of mynde.

'Taughte I the not thies wisdom in sen-
tence,—
To every tale broughte to the of newe
Not hastily to yeve therto credence
Into tyme thou knew that it were trewe?
Al is not golde that shynethe goldisse hewe,
Nor stonys al by nature, as I fynde,
Be not saphires that shewethe colour ynde.⁵

'In this doctryne I loste my laboure, 309
To teche the suche proverbis of substaunce;
Now mayst thou se thyn owne blynde
errour, 0
For al my body peysed⁶ in balaunce,
Weieth not an unce; rude is thi remem-
braunce,
I to have more payce⁷ clos in myne en-
trayle,
Than al my body set for the countirvayle!

'Al my bodye weyeth not an unce,
Hough myght I than have in me a stone,
That peyssith more, as dothe a gret jag-
ounce?

Thy brayne is dul, thy witte is almoste gone;
Of thre wisdoms thou hast forgotten oon, 320
Thou shuldest not aftir my sentence
To every tale yeve hastily credence.

'I hadde also be ware bothe even and
morowe,
For thing lost of soden aventure;
Thou shuld not make to mekelle sorowe,
Whan thou seest thou mayst not it recure;⁸
Here thou faylest which doste thi busy cure
In thi snare to kache me agayne;
Thou art a fole, thi labour is in vayne.

'In the thirdd also thou doste rave: 330
I hadde thou shuldest, in no maner wyse,
Coveyte thing whiche thou maist not have,
In whiche thou hast forgotten myne em-
pryse;⁹

That I may sey playnly to devyse,
Thou hast of madnesse forgotten al thre
Notable wysdoms that I taught the.

'It ware but foly withe the more to carpe, 10
Or to preche of wysdoms more or lasse;
I holde hym madde that bryngeth forth his
harppe,

Therone to teche a rude for-dulle¹¹ asse; 340
And madde is he that syngeth a fole a masse;
And he is moste madde that dothe his besy-
nesse,

To teche a chorle termys of gentillesse.

'And semlably in Apprille and in May,
Whan gentille birddes most maketh melodie,
The cokkowe syng can than but oon lay,
In othir tymes she hathe no fantasye;
Thus every thing, as clerks specifice,
As frute and trees, and folke of every de-
gre, 349
Fro whens they come thei take a tarage.¹²

'The vintere tretethe of his holsom wynes,
Of gentille frute bostethe the gardener,
The fyssher casteth his hokes and his lynes
To kache fyssh in every fressh rever,
Of tilthe of lande tretethe the boueer,¹³
The chorle delitethe to speke of rybaudye,¹⁴
The hunter also to speke of venerye.

¹ like.

² upon.

³ how.

⁴ did.

⁵ blue.

⁶ weighed.

⁷ French *poids*, weight.

⁸ recover.

⁹ undertaking.

¹⁰ talk.

¹¹ very dull.

¹² flavor.

¹³ farmer.

¹⁴ coarse jests.

'Al oon to the a ffaucion and a kyghte,¹
 As goode an howle as a poppingaye,² 359
 A downghille doke as deyute as a snyghte;³
 Who servethe a chorle hathe many a car-
 ful day.

Adewe! sir chorle, farwele! I flye my way.
 O caste⁴ me never aftir my lyfe enduring
 A-fore a chorle any more to syng.'

Ye folke that shal here this fable, see or
 rede,

Now forged talis I counsaile you to fle,
 For losse of goode takethe not to gret hede,
 Bethe not malicious for noon adversite,
 Coveitethe no thing that may not be; 369
 And remembre, wherever that ye goone,
 A chorles chorle is woo begone.

Unto purpos this proverd is full ryfc,
 Rade and reported by olde remembraunce.
 A childe birrde and a knavis wyfe
 Have often siethe⁵ gret sorowe and mys-
 chaunce.

Who hathe fredom hathe al suffisaunce;
 Bettir is fredom withe litelle in gladnesse,
 Than to be thralle withe al worldly rich-
 esse.

Go, gentille quayer!⁶ and recommaunde me
 Unto my maister with humble effectioun;
 Beseke hym lowly, of mercy and pite, 381
 Of this rude makyng to have compassion;
 And as touching the translacioun
 Oute of Frenshe, hough ever the Englissh
 be,

Al thing is saide undir correctioun,
 With supportacion of your benignite.

THE TEMPLE OF GLAS⁷

FOR thought, constreint, and grevous hevi-
 nes,

For pensifhede, and for heigh distres,
 To bed I went now this othir nyght,
 Whan that Lucina with hir pale light
 Was joyned last with Phebus in Aquarie,
 Amyd Decembre, when of Januarie

¹ falcon and a kite. ² parrot. ³ snits i.e. plover or snipe. ⁴ arrange, plan. ⁵ time. ⁶ quire, i.e. book.

⁷ From Schick's ed. for the Early English Text Society, London, 1891, with a few typographical changes. This poem is an allegorical "love vision," a kind of writing brought anew into fashion by the French poets of the fourteenth century, and much used by Chaucer and others. Lydgate's poem is of course inspired by Chaucer's *House of Fame*.

Ther be kalendes of the nwe yere,
 And derk Diane, ithorned, nothing clere,
 Had hid hir bemys undir a mysty cloude:
 Within my bed for sore⁸ I gan me shroude, 10
 Al desolate for constreint of my wo,
 The longe nyght waloing to and fro,
 Til atte last, er I gan taken kepe,⁹
 Me did oppresse a sodein dedeli slepe,
 With-in the which methoughte that I was
 Ravysshid in spirit in a temple of glas—
 I nyste¹⁰ how, ful fer in wildirnes—
 That foundid was, as bi liklynesse,
 Not opou stele, but on a craggy roche,
 Like ise ifrore.¹¹ And as I did approche, 20
 Again the sonne that shone, me thought, so
 clere

As eny cristal, and ever nere and nere
 As I gan neigh this grisli, dredful place,
 I wex astonyed: the light so in my face
 Bigan to smyte, so persing ever in oue
 On evere part, where that I gan gone,
 That I ne myght nothing, as I would,
 Abouten me conside and bihold
 The wondre estres,¹² for brightnes of the
 soune;

Til atte last certein skyes donne,¹³ 30
 With wind ichaced, have her cours iwent
 To-fore the stremes of Titan and iblent,¹⁴
 So that I myght, with-in and with-out, e,
 Where so I walk, biholden me aboute,
 For to report the fasoun and manere
 Of al this place, that was circulere
 In compaswise, round bentaile¹⁵ wrought.
 And whan that I hade long gone and sought,
 I fond a wicket, and entrid in as fast
 Into the temple, and myn eighen cast 40
 On evere side, now lowe and eft¹⁶ aloft.
 And right anone, as I gan walken soft,
 If I the soth aright reporte shal,
 I saughe depeynt opou evere wal,
 From est to west, ful many a faire image
 Of sondri lovers, lich as thei were of age
 I-sette in ordre, aftir thei were trwe,
 With lifli colours wondir fresch of hwe.
 And, as me thought, I saughe somme sit
 and stonde,

And some kneling with billis in hir honde, 50
 And some with compleint, woful and pit-
 ouis,

With doleful chere to putten to Venus,
 So as she sate fleting in the se,
 Upou hire wo forto have pite.

⁸ sorrow. ⁹ heed. ¹⁰ did not know. ¹¹ frozen.
¹² interior rooms. ¹³ dark clouds. ¹⁴ mingled
 (so as to produce shade). ¹⁵ upper part of a wall;
 exact meaning obscure. ¹⁶ again.

And first of al I saugh there of Cartage
 Dido the quene, so goodli of visage,
 That gan complein hir adventure and caas,
 How she deceyved was of Eneas,
 For al his hestis and his othis sworne,
 And said: 'alas, that ever she was borne,'⁶⁰
 Whan that she saugh that ded she moste be.
 And next I saugh the compleint of Medee,
 Hou that she was falsed of Iason.

And nygh bi Venus saugh I sit Addoun,
 And al the maner, how the bore him slough,
 For whom she wepte and hade pein inoughe.

There saugh I also, how Penalope,
 For she so long hir lord ne myghte se,
 Ful ofte wex of colour pale and grene.

And aldernext¹ was the fresshe quene, ⁷⁰
 I mene Alceste, the noble trwe wyfe,
 And for Admete hou sho lost hir life,
 And for hir trouth, if I shal not lie,
 Hou she was turnyd to a daiesie.

There was also Grisildis innocence,
 And al hir mekenes, and hir pacience.
 There was eke Isaude — and meni a nothir
 mo —

And al the turment, and al the cruel wo,
 That she hade for Tristram al hir live.
 And hou that Tesbie her herte dide rife ⁸⁰
 With thilke swerd of him Piramus;
 And al the maner, hou that Theseus
 The Minatawre slow amynd the hous
 That was for-wrynkke² bi craft of Dedalus,
 When that he was in prison shette in Crete.

And hou that Phillis felt of loves hete
 The grete fire of Demophon, alas,
 And for his falshed and for his trespas
 Upon the walles depeint men myghte se,
 How she was honged upon a filbert tre. ⁹⁰

And mani a stori, mor then I rekin can,
 Were in the tempil, and how that Paris wan
 The faire Heleyne, the lusti fresshe quene,
 And hou Achilles was for Policene
 I-slain unwarli within Troie toune:

Al this sawe I, walkynge up and doun.
 Ther sawe I writen eke the hole tale,
 Hou Philomene into a nyghtyngale
 Iturned was, and Progne unto a swalow;
 And how the Sabyns in hir maner halowe ¹⁰⁰
 The fest of Lucesse yit in Rome toune.

There saugh I also the sorow of Pala-
 moun,

That he in prison felt, and al the smert,
 And how that he, thurgh unto his hert,
 Was hurt unwarli thurgh casting of aneyghe
 Of faire fressh, the yunge Emelie,

¹ next of all.

² built as a labyrinth.

And al the strife bitwene him and his
 brothir,

And hou that one faught eke with that othir
 With-in the grove, til thei bi Theseus
 Accordid were, as Chaucer tellith us. ¹¹⁰

And forthirmore, as I gan bibold,
 I sawgh how Phebus with an arow of gold
 I-woundid was, thurgh oute in his side,
 Onli bi envie of the god Cupide,
 And hou that Daphne unto a laurer tre
 Iturned was, when she dide fle;

And hou that Love gan to chaunge his
 cope³

Oonli for love of the faire Europe,
 And into a bole, when he did hir sue,⁴ ¹¹⁹
 List of his godhode his fourme to transmwe;
 And hou that he bi transmutacioun
 The shap gan take of Amphitrioun
 For hir, Almen, so passing of beaute;
 So was he hurt, for al his deite,
 With loves dart, and myght it not ascape.

There saugh I also hou that Mars was
 take

Of Vulcanus, and with Venus found,
 And with the cheynes invisible bound.

Ther was also al the poesie
 Of him, Mercurie and Philologye,⁵ ¹³⁰
 And hou that she, for hir sapience,
 Iweddit was to god of eloquence,
 And hou the Musis lowli did obeie,
 High into heven this ladi to convei,
 And with hir song hou she was magnified
 With Iubiter to bein istellified.

And uppermore depeint men myghte se,
 How with hir ring, goodli Canace
 Of evere foule the ledne and the song ¹³⁹
 Coud undirstond, as she welk hem among;
 And hou hir brothir so oft holpen was
 In his myschefe⁶ bi the stede of bras.

And forthermore in the tempil were
 Ful mani a thousand of lovers, here and
 there,

In sondri wise redi to complein
 Unto the goddes, of hir wo and pein,
 Hou thei were hindrid, some for envie,
 And hou the serpent of fals jelousie
 Ful many a lover hath iput o bak,⁷
 And causeles on hem ilaid a lak.⁸ ¹⁵⁰
 And some ther were that pleynd on absence,
 That werin exiled and put oute of presence

³ disguise himself.

⁴ pursue.

⁵ An allusion to the famous didactic allegorical work of Martianus Capella (fifth century), *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, mentioned by Chaucer in the *House of Fame*.

⁶ distress.

⁷ aback.

⁸ alleged some blemish.

Thurgh wikkid tungis and fals suspeciou,
 With-oute mercy or remysyoun.
 And other eke her servise spent in vain,
 Thurgh cruel daunger, and also bi disdain;
 And some also that loved, soth to sein,
 And of her ladi were not lovyd again.
 And othir eke, that for poverté
 Durst in no wise hir grete adversite ¹⁶⁰
 Discure¹ ne open, lest thai were refusid;
 And some for wanting also werin accusid,
 And othir eke that loved secreli,
 And of her ladi durst aske no merci,
 Lest that she would of hem have despité;
 And some also that putten ful grete wite²
 On double lovers, that love thingis nwe,
 Thurgh whos falsnes hindred be the trwe.
 And some ther were, as it is ofte found,
 That for her ladi meny a blodi wounde ¹⁷⁰
 Endurid hath in mani a regioun,
 Whiles that an other hath possessioun
 Al of his ladi, and berith awai the fruyte
 Of his labor and of al his suyte.
 And other eke compleyned of Riches,
 Hou he with Tresour doth his besines
 To wynnen al, againes kynd and ryght,
 Wher trw lovers have force noon ne myght.
 And some ther were, as maydens yung of
 age,
 That pleined sore with peping³ and with
 rage, ¹⁸⁰
 That thei were coupled, againes al nature,
 With croked elde, that mai not long endure
 Forto perfourme the lust of loves plai:
 For it ne sit⁴ not unto fresshe May
 Forto be coupled to oolde Ianuari —
 Thei ben so divers that thei moste varie —
 For eld is grueching and malencolious,
 Ay ful of ire and suspicious,
 And iouth entendeth to ioy and lustines,
 To myrth and plai and to al gladnes. ¹⁹⁰
 'Allas that ever that it shulde fal,
 So soote sugre icoupled be with gal!' ¹
 These yonge folk criden ofte sithe,
 And praied Venus hir pouer forto kithe⁵
 Upon this myschef, and shape remedie.
 And right anon I herd othir crie
 With sobbing teris, and with ful pitous
 sounne,
 Tofore the goddes, bi lamentacioun,
 That were constrayned in hir tender youthe,
 And in childhode, as it is ofte couthe, ²⁰⁰
 Y-entred were into religioun,
 Or thei hade yeris of discreisioun,

That al her life cannot but complein,
 In wide copis perfeccion to feine,
 Ful covertli to curen al hir smert,
 And shew the contrarie outward of her hert.
 Thus saugh I wepen many a faire maide,
 That on hir freendis al the wite⁷ thei leide.
 And other next I saugh there in gret rage,
 That thei were maried in her tendir age, ²¹⁰
 With-oute fredom of eleccioun,
 Wher love hath seld domynacioun:
 For love, at laarge and at liberte,
 Would freli chese, and not with such trete.⁸
 And other saugh I ful oft wepe and wring,
 That they in men founde swych varynge,
 To love a seisoun, while that beaute floureth,
 And bi disdein so ungoodli loureth
 On hir that whilom he callid his ladi dere,
 That was to him so plesaunt and entere; ⁹ ²²⁰
 But lust with fairness is so overgone,
 That in her hert trouth abideth none.
 And som also I saugh in teris reyne,
 And pitousli on God and kynde pleyne,
 That ever thei would on eny creature
 So much beaute, passing bi mesure,
 Set on a woman, to yeve occasioun
 A man to love to his confusioun,
 And nameli there where he shal have no
 grace;
 For with a loke, forth-bi as he doth pace, ²³⁰
 Ful ofte falleth, thurgh casting of an
 yghe,
 A man is woundid, that he most nedis
 deye,
 That never efter peraventure shal hir se.
 Whi wil God don so gret a cruelte
 To eny man, or to his creature,
 To maken him so mych wo endure,
 For hir, percaas,¹⁰ whom he shal in no wise
 Rejoise never, but so forth in jewise ¹¹
 Ledin his life, til that he be grave.¹²
 For he ne durst of hir no merci crave, ²⁴⁰
 And eke peraventure, though he durst and
 would,
 He can not wit, where he hir finde shuld.
 I saugh there eke, and therof hade I routhe,
 That som were hindred for covetise and
 slouth,
 And some also for her hastines,
 And other eke for hir reklesnes —
 But alderlast as I walk and biheld,
 Beside Pallas with hir cristall sheld,
 Tofore the statue of Venus set on height,
 How that ther knelid a ladi in my syght ²⁵⁰

¹ reveal. ² blame. ³ screaming.
⁴ becomes. ⁵ show. ⁶ known.

⁷ blame. ⁸ treat, have to do. ⁹ devoted.
¹⁰ perchance. ¹¹ judgment, i.e. sorrow. ¹² buried.

Tofore the goddes, which right as the sonne
Passeth the sterres and doth hir stremes
donne,¹

And Lucifer, to void the nyghtes sorow,
In clerenes passeth erli bi the morow,
And so as Mai hath the sovereinte
Of evere moneth, of fairnes and beaute,
And as the rose in swetnes and odoure
Surmounteth floures, and bawme of al licour
Haveth the pris, and as the rubie bright
Of al stoness in beaute and in sight, 260
As it is know, now the regalie:
Right so this ladi with hir goodli eigh,
And with the stremes of hir loke so bright,
Surmounteth al thurgh beaute in my
sighte.

For to tel hir gret semelines,
Hir womanhed, hir port, and hir fairnes,
It was a mervaille, hou ever that nature
Coude in hir werkis make a creature
So aungelike, so goodli on to se,
So femynyn or passing of beaute, 270
Whos sonnyssh here,² brighter than gold
were,³

Lich Phebus bemys shynyn in his spere —
The goodlihed eke of hir fresshli face,
So replenysshid of beaute and of grace,
So wel ennuyd⁴ by Nature and depeint,
That rose and lileis togedir were so meint,⁵
So egalli by good proporcoun,
That, as me thought, in myn inspeccioun
I gan mervaille, hou God, or werk of kynd,
Mighten of beaute such a tresour find, 280
To yeven hir so passing excellence.
For in goode faith, thurgh hir heigh pres-
ence

The tempil was enlumynd environ;
And forto speke of condicioun,
She was the best that myghte ben on lyve:
Forther was noon that with hir myghte strive,
To speke of bounte, or of gentilles,
Of womanhed, or of lowlynes,
Of curtesie, or of goodlihed,
Of spech, of chere, or of semlyhed, 290
Of port benygne, and of daliaunce,
The beste taught; and therto of plesaunce
She was the wel, and eke of oneste
An exemplarie, and mirroure eke was she
Of secrenies, of trouthe, of faythfulnes,
And to al other ladi and maistres,
To sue vertu, whoso list to lere.⁶
And so this ladi, benigne and humble of
chere,

¹ bedim.
⁴ tinted.

² shinny hair.
⁶ mingled.

³ wire.
⁶ teach.

Knelling I saugh, al clad in grene and white,
Tofore Venus, goddes of al delite, 300
Enbrouded al with stoness and perre⁷
So richeli, that joi it was to se,
With sondri rolles on hir garnement,
Forto expoun the trouthe of hir entent,
And shew fulli, that for hir humbilles,
And for hir vertu, and hir stabilnes,
That she was rote of womanli plesaunce.
Therefore hir woord withoute variance
Enbrouded was, as men myghte se:
'De mieulx en mieulx,' with stoness and
perre: 310

This is to sein that she, this benigne,
From bettir to bettir hir herte doth resigne,
And al hir wil, to Venus the goddes,
Whan that hir list hir harmes to redresse.
For as me thought sumwhat bi hir chere,
Forto compleyne she hade gret desire;
For in hir hond she held a litel bil,
Forto declare the somme of al hir will,
And to the goddes hir quarel forto shewe,
Theffect of which was this in wordys
fewe:—⁸ 320

NEW TROY

(*The Troy Book*, ll. 479-768)⁹

THE sorwe aswaged, and the syghes olde,
By longe processe, liche as I yow tolde,
This worthi kyng, callyd Priamus,
Is in his herte now so desyrus,
Up-on the pleyn, that was so waste and
wyld,
So strong a toun of newe for to bilde,
At his devyse a cite edefye,
That schal th'assautys outterly defye

⁷ gems.

⁸ After this the lady, and then the lover, make over-long supplications to Venus, who naturally counsels the lady to accept the devoted service of the knight. The poem ends at line 1403 with "May Lydgate's poem please his lady."

⁹ Lydgate's *Troy Book* is a version of the celebrated *Historia Trojana* of Guido delle Colonne; that is, it gives the account of Troy which passed current in the Middle Ages—the account received by Chaucer, for example, and the Gawain poet. In this strange and romantic tale the first Troy, Laomedon's, had been destroyed during Priam's absence by Hercules and Jason. It should be noted that London, fabled to have been founded by the Trojans, was sometimes called New Troy by the poets. Our extract gives an interesting mediæval conception of town-planning as it might have been practiced by Edward I and other great founders. Warton in his *History of English Poetry*, London, 1840, vol. II, §23, has a good description of the Troy Book. Our text is that of Bergen in his edition for the Early English Text Soc., with a few unimportant modifications in typography.

Of alle enmyes, and his mortal foon,
With riche tourys and wallys of hard
stoon. 10

And al aboute the contres enviroon,
He made seke in every regioun
For swiche werkemen as were corious,
Of wyt inventyf, of castyng¹ merveilous;
Or swiche as coude crafte of gemetrye,
Or wer sotyle in her fantasye;
And for everyche that was good devysour,
Mason, hewer, or crafty quareour;
For every wright and passyng carpenter,
That may be founde, owther fer or nere; 20
For swiche as koude grave, grope,² or
kerve,

Or swiche as werne able for to serve
With lym or stoon, for to reise a wal,
With bataillyng and crestis marcial;
Or swiche as had konyng in her hed,
Alabastre, owther white or redde,
Or marbil graye for to pulsche³ it pleyn,
To make it smothe of veynes and of greyn.
He sent also for every ymagour,
Bothe in entaille,⁴ and every purtreyour 30
That coude drawe, or with colour peynt
With hewes fresche, that the werke nat
feynt;⁵

And swiche as coude with countenaunces
glade

Make an ymage that wil nevere fade:
To counterfet in metal, tre, or stoon
The sotil werke of Pigmaleoun,
Or of Appollo, the whiche as bokis telle,
In ymagerye alle other dide excelle;
For by his crafty werkynge corious,
The towmbe he made of kyng Daryus 40
Whiche Alysandre dide on heyghte reise,
Only for men schuld his fame preise,
In his conquest by Perce whan he went.
And thus Priam for every maister sent,
For eche kerver and passynge joynour,
To make knottis with many corious flour,
To sette on crestis with-inne and with-out
Up-on the wal the cite rounde aboute;
Or who that wer excellyng in practik
Of any art callyd mekanyk, 50
Or hadde a name flouryng or famos,
Was after sent to come to Priamus.
For he purposeth, this noble worthi kyng,
To make a cite most royal in byldyng,
Brod, large, and wyde, and lest it were as-
sailed,

For werre proudly abouten enbatailled.

¹ planning, reckoning. ³ groove.
² polish. ⁴ engraving. ⁵ fade.

And first the grounde he made to be sought,
Ful depe and lowe, that it faille nought
To make sure the foundacioun;
In the place where the olde toun 60
Was first ybilt, he the wallis sette;
And he of lond many myle out mette,⁶
Aboute in compas, for to make it large,
As the maysters that toke on hem the charge
Devysed han the setting and the syyt,
For holsom eyr to be more of delyt.
And whan the soille, defouled with ruyne
Of walles old, was made pleyn as lyne,
The werkmen gan this cite for to founde,
Ful myghtely with stonys square and
rounde, 70

That in this world was to it noon lyche
Of werkmanship, nor of bilydng riche,
Nor of crafte of coryous masoury.
I can no termys to speke of gemetrye,
Wherfore as now I muste hem sette a-syde;
For douteles I radde never Euclide,
That the maister and the foundour was
Of alle that werkyn by square or compas,
Or kepe her mesour by leyle or by lyne;
I am to rude clerly to diffyne 80
Or to discrive this werk in every parte,
For lak of termys longyng to that arte.
But I dar wel of trouthe affermy here,
In al this world ne was ther never pere
Un-to this cite, and write it for a sothe,
As in his boke my mayster Guydo doth.
And that it myght in prosperite,
In hyge honour and felicite,
From al assaut perpetuelly contune,⁷
It reysed was in worschip of Neptune, 90
And namyd Troye, as it was to-forn,
Lyche the firste that was thourgh Grekis
lorn.

The lenthe was, schortly to conclude,
Thre dayes journe, lyche the latitude,
That never I herd make mencion
Of swiche another of fundacioun,
So huge in compas nor of swiche larges,
Nor to counte so passyng of fayrnes,
So edified or lusty to the syght.
And, as I rede, the walles wern on highte
Two hundrid cubites, al of marbil gray, 101
Maskowed⁸ with-out for sautis⁹ and assay;
And it to make more pleasaunt of delyt,
A-mong the marbil was alabaster white
Meynt¹⁰ in the walles, rounde the toun
aboute,

To make it schewe with-inne and with-out

⁶ measured. ⁷ continue. ⁸ Machicolated.
⁹ assaults. ¹⁰ Mingled.

So fresche, so riche, and so delitable,
That it alone was incomperable
Of alle cites that any mortal man
Sawe ever yit, siþe the world began. ¹¹⁰
And at the corner of every wal was set
A crowne of golde with riche stonys fret,¹
That schone ful bright ageyn the sonne
schene;

And euery tour bretexed² was so clene
Of chose stoon, that wer nat fer a-sondre,
That to beholde it was a verray wonder.
Ther-to this cite compassed enviroyn,
Hadde sexe gatis to entre in-to the toun:
The first of al and strengest eke with al,
Largest also and most principal, ¹²⁰
Of myghty bilynge allone peereles,
Was by the kyng callyd Dardanydes;
And in story, lyche as it is fownde,
Tymbria was named the secounde;
And the thridde callyd Helyas;
The fourte gate hight also Cethas;
The fyfte Troiana; the syxte Anthonydes,
Strong and myghty bothe in werre and pes,
With square toures set on every syde.

At whos corners, of verray pompe and
pride, ¹³⁰

The werkmen han, with sterne and fel
visages,

Of riche entaille, set up gret ymages,
Wrought out of ston, that never ar like to
fayle,

Ful coriously enarmed for batayle.

And thourgh the wal, her fomen for to
lette,

At every tour wer grete gunnys sette,
For assaut and sodeyn aventurys;
And on tourettis wer reysed up figurys
Of wyld bestis, as beris and lyouns,
Of tigers, bores, of serpentis and dragouns
And hertis eke, with her brode hornes, ¹⁴¹
Olyfautes and large unicornes,
Buglis,³ bolys, and many grete grifoun,
Forged of brasse, of copur and latoun,
That cruelly by sygnes of her facys
Up-on her foon made fel manacys.
Barbykans and bolewerkys huge,
A-fore the toun made for highe refuge,
Yiffe nede were, erly and eke late;
And portecolys stronge at every gate, ¹⁵⁰
That hem thar nat noon assailyng charge;
And the lowkis thikke, brode, and large,
Of the gatys al of yoten⁴ bras.
And with-inne the myghty schittying⁵ was

Of strong yrne barres square and rounde,
And gret barrerys picched⁶ in the grounde,
With huge cheynes forged for diffence,
Whiche nolde⁷ breke for no violence,
That hard it was through hem for to wyne.
And every hous, that was bilt with-inne, ¹⁶⁰
Every paleys and every mancioun,
Of marbil werne thoroughout al the toun,
Of crafty bilydyng and werkyng most roial.
And the heght was of every wal
Sixty cubites from the grounde accountid;
And ther was non that other hath sur-
mountid

In the cite, but of on heght alyche,
In verray sothe, bothe of pore and riche,
That it was harde of heighe estat or lowe
Hous or paly asounder for to knowe, ¹⁷⁰
So egaly of tymbre and of stoon
Her housis wern reysed everychon.
And if i schulde rehersen by and by
The korve⁸ knottes by crafte of masounry,
The fresche enbowyng,⁹ with vergis¹⁰ right
as linsys,

And the vowsyng¹¹ ful of babewynes,¹²
The riche koynyng,¹³ the lusty tablementis,¹⁴
Vynnettis¹⁵ rennyng in the casementis —
Though the termys in Englisch wolde ryme,
To rekne hem alle I have as now no tyme,
Ne no langage pyked for the nonys, ¹⁸¹
The sotil joynnyng to tellen of the stonys,
Nor how thei putten in stede of morter,
In the joynturys copur gilt ful clere,
To make hem joyne by level and by lyne,
Among the marbil freschely for to schyne
Agein the sonne, whan his schene lyght
Smote in the gold, that was bornyd¹⁷ bright,
To make the werke gletere¹⁸ on every syde.
And of this toun the stretis large and wyde
Wer by crafte so prudently provided, ¹⁹¹
And by workemen sette so and devided,
That holsom eyr amyddis myght enspire
Erly on morwe to hem that it desyre;
And Zephirus, that is so comfortable
For to norysche thinges vegetable,
In tyme of yere, thorough-oute every strete,
With sugred flavour, so lusty and so swete,
Most pleasantly in the eyr gan smyte,
The cyteeyns only to delyte; ²⁰⁰
And with his brethe hem to recomfort,
Whan thei list walke hem silven to dis-
port.

⁶ set. ⁷ would not. ⁸ carved. ⁹ arching.

¹⁰ columns. ¹¹ vaultings, tabernacles. ¹² grotesque
figures, images. ¹³ quoining, corner-work. ¹⁴ panels.

¹⁵ Carved tendrils. ¹⁶ suitable for the occasion.

¹⁷ burnished. ¹⁸ smoother.

¹ ornamented. ² battlemented.

³ Buffaloes. ⁴ cast. ⁵ fastening.

And thorough the toun, by crafty purvi-
aunce,

By gret avys and discret ordynaunce,
By compas cast, and squared out by squires,¹
Of pulshed marbil up-on strong pilleris,
Devised wern, longe, large, and wyde,
In the frountel² of every stretis syde,
Fresche alures³ with lusty highe pynales,
And monstryng⁴ outward riche tabernacles,
Vowted⁵ above like reclinatories,⁶ 211
That called werne deambulatories,
Men to walke to-gydre tweine and tweyne,
To kepe hem drie whan it dide reyne,
Or hem to save from tempest, wynde, or
thonder,

Yit that hem list schrowde hem silve ther-
under.

And every hous cured⁷ was with led;
And many gargoyl and many hidous hed
With spoutis thorough, and pipes as thei
ought,

From the ston-werke to the canel raught,⁸
Voyding filthes low in-to the grounde, 221
Thorough gratis percid of yren percid rounde;
The stretis paved bothe in lengthe and
brede,

In cheker wyse with stonys white and rede.
And every craft, that any maner man
In any lond devise or rekene can,
Kyng Priamus, of highe discrecioun,
Ordeyned bath to dwellyn in the toun,
And in stretis, severyd her and yonder,
Everyche from other to be sette a-sonder,
That thei myght, for more comodite, 231
Eche be hym silfe werke at liberte:
Gold-smythes first, and riche jowellers,
And by hem silf crafty browdereris,⁹
Wevers also of wolne and of lyne,
Of cloth of gold, dasmaske, and satyn,
Of welwet, cendel,¹⁰ and double samyt eke,
And every clothe that men list to seke;
Smythes also, that koude forge wele 239
Swerdis, pollex,¹¹ and speris scharp of stele,
Dartis, daggeris, for to mayme and wounde,
And quarrel¹² hedis scharp and square-
ygrounde.

Ther wer also crafty armoureris,
Bowyers,¹³ and faste by fleccheris,¹⁴
And swyche as koude make schaftes pleyn,
And other eke that dide her besy peyn

For the werre to make also trappuris,¹⁵
Bete¹⁶ baners and royal cote armuris,
And by devise stondardis, and penowns,
And for the felde fresche and gay gy-
touns.¹⁷ 250

And every crafte that may rekned be,
To tell shortly, was in his cite.

And thorough this toun, so riche and excel-
lent,

In the myddes a large river went,
Causing to hem ful gret commodite;
The whiche on tweyne hath partid the cite,
Of cours ful swyft, with fresche stremys
clere,

And lighte Xanctus, as Guydo doth us
lere.

And as I rede, that up-on this flood,
On eche-asyde many mylle stood, 260
Whan rede was her grayn and corn to
grinde,

Hem to sustene, in story as I fynde.
This river eke, of fysche ful plenteuous,
Devised was by werkmen corious
So craftely, thorough eastyng¹⁸ sovereyne,
That in his course the stremys myght at-
teyn

For to areche,¹⁹ as Guydo doth conjecte,²⁰
By archis strong his cours for to reflecte
Thorough condut pipis, large and wyde
with-al,

By certeyn meatis²¹ artificial, 270
That it made a ful purgacioun
Of al ordure and fylthes in the toun,
Waschyng the stretys as thei stod a rowe,
And the goteris in the erthe lowe,
That in the cite was no filthe sene;
For the canel skoured was so clene,
And devoyded²² in so secre wyse,
That no man myght espien nor devyse
By what engyn the filthes, fer nor ner,
Wern born a-way by cours of the ryver —
So covertly every thing was cured.²³ 281
Wher-by the toun was utterly assured
From engenderyng of al corrupcioun,
From wikked eyr and from infeccioun,
That causyn ofte by her violence
Mortalite and gret pestilence.

And by example of this flode ther was
Made Tibre at Rome, and wrought by
Eneas,

The which also departed Rome on two,
Myn auctor seith, I not wher it be so. 290

¹ squares. ² front, façade. ³ covered passages.

⁴ showing. ⁵ Vaulted. ⁶ couches (New Eng.

Dict.); better, confessionals? ⁷ covered. ⁸ reached
to the gutter. ⁹ embroiderers. ¹⁰ thin silk.

¹¹ poleaxe. ¹² quarrel, arrow for the crossbow.

¹³ Bow-makers. ¹⁴ arrow-featherers.

¹⁵ trappings.

¹⁶ device.

¹⁷ channels.

¹⁸ Embroider.

¹⁹ reach.

²⁰ conjecture.

²¹ emptied.

²² small flags.

²³ covered.

BYCORNE AND CHICHEVACHE ¹

*First ther shal stonde an ymage in poet wise,
seyeng these iij balades*

O PRUDENT folkes takithe heede,
And remembreth in youre lyves,
How this story dothe procede,
Of the husbundes and theyr wyfes,
Of theyr accorde and theyr stryves,
Withe lyf or dethe whiche to derayne ²
Is graunted to these bestes twayne.

*Than shal be portrayed two bestis, oon fatte,
another leene.*

For this Bycorne of his nature
Will non other maner foode,
But pacient husks never in his pasture, ¹⁰
And Chichevache etithe wymmen goode:
And bothe these bestes, by the roode!
Be fatte or leene, it may nat faile,
Like lak or plente of theyr vitale.

Of Chychevache and of Bycorne
Tretithe holy this matere,
Whos story hathe taught us beforne,
Howe these bestes bothe in feere ³
Have ther pasture, as ye shal here,
Of men and wymmen in sentence, ²⁰
Thurgh suffraunce or thurgh impacience.

*Than shal be portrayed a fatte beste callid By-
corne, of the cuntrey of Bycornoyes, and seyn these
three baladis folowyng.*

Of Bycornoyes I am Bycorne,
Ful fatte and rounde here as I stonde,
And in mariage bounde and sworne
To Chivache, as hir husbonde,
Whiche will nat eete, on see nor londe,
But pacient wyfes debonayre,
Whiche to her husbundes be nat contrayre,

Ful scarce, God wote! is hir vitale,
Humble wyfes she fynt ⁴ so fewe, ³⁰
For alweys at the countre-taile ⁶
Theyr tunge clappithe and dothe hewe; ⁶
Suche meke wyfes I be-shrewe,

¹ "Two-Horn" and "Lean-Cow" are the English renderings of the mediæval French "Bigorne" (meaning uncertain) and Chicheface (lean-face). Chaucer in the *Clerk's Tale*, l. 1131, warns wives not to be so patient as Griselda "lest Chichevache them swelwe in his entraille." Our piece is said to have been written for "a peynted or desteyned clothe for an halle, a parlour, or a chambre"; v. *Anglia* xxii, 364. The text is J. O. Halliwell's in the Percy Society Edition of Lydgate's Minor Poems, London, 1840, p. 129.

² adjudg.

³ together.

⁴ findeth.

⁵ in retaliation.

⁶ make outcry.

That neyther can at bedde ne boorde
Theyr husbundes nat forbere oon woorde.

But my foode and my cherisshynge,
To telle plainly and nat to varye,
Is of suche folke whiche theyr livynge
Dare to theyr wyfes be nat contrarye, ⁴⁰
Ne from theyr lustis dare nat varye,
Nor withe hem holde no champartye, ⁷
Al suche my stomack wil defye. ⁸

*Than shal be portrayed a company of men com-
yng towards this beste Bycorne, and sey these
four baladis.*

Felawes, takethe heede, and ye may see
How Bycorne castithe hym to devoure
Alle humble men, bothe yow and me,
Ther is no gayne may us socoure:
Woo be therfor, in halle and boure,
To al these husbundes whiche theyr lives
Maken maystresses of theyr wyfes.

Who that so dothe, this is the lawe, ⁵⁰
That this Bycorne wil hym oppresse,
And devouren in his mawe,
That of his wife makithe his maystresse;
This wil us bryng in grete distresse,
For we, for oure humylite,
Of Bycorne shal devoured be.

We stonden plainly in suche case,
That they to us maystressis be;
We may wele syng, and seyn, alas!
That we gaf hem the soverante; ⁶⁰
For we ben thralle and they be free;
Wherfor Bycorn, this cruel beste,
Wil us devouren at the lest.

But who that can be soverayne,
And his wife teeche and chastise,
That she dare nat a worde gayn-seyn,
Nor disobeye in no manner wise;
Of suche a man I can devise,
He stant under protectiounne,
From Bycornes jurisdiccounne. ⁷⁰

*Than shal ther be a woman devoured in the
mowthe of Chichevache, cryeng to alle wyfes, and
sey these balad:*

O noble wyves, bethe wele ware,
Takithe ensample now by me;
Or ellis afferme wele I dare,
Ye shal be ded, ye shal nat flee;
Bethe crabbed, voydithe humylite,

⁷ rivalry.

⁸ digest.

Or Chichevache ne wil nat faile
Yow for to swolow in his entraile.

Than shal ther be portrayed a long horned beste, sklendre and leene, with sharp tethe, and on his body nothyng sawf skyn and boon.

Chichevache this is my name,
Hungry, megre, sklendre, and leene,
To shewe my body I have gret shame; 80
For hunger I feele so grete teene,¹
On me no fatnesse wil be seene,
By cause that pasturē I fynde none,
Therfor I am but skyn and boon.

For my fedying in existence
Is of wymmen that ben meke,
And liche Gresield in pacience,
Or more theyr bounte for to eeke;
But I ful longe may gon and seeke,
Or I can fynde a good repast 90
A morwe to breke with my fast.

I trowe ther be a deere yeere²
Of pacient wymmen now these dayes;
Who grevithe hem withe word or chere,
Lete hym be ware of suche assayes,
For it is more than thritty Mayes,
That I have sought from lond to lond,
But yit oon Gresield never I fond.

I fonde but oon in al my lyve,
And she was ded ago ful yooore. 100
For more pasture I wil nat stryve,
Nor seche for my foode no more,
Ne for vitaille me to restore;
Wymmen bien woxen so prudent,
They wil no more be pacient.

Than shal be portrayed after Chivache, an olde man withe a baston on his bake, manasyng the best for devouring of his wyfe.

My wife, alas! devoured is,
Most pacient and most pesible,
She never sayde to me amyssse,
Whom hathe now slayn this best horrible,
And for it is an impossible, 110
To fynde ever suche a wyfe,
I wil live sowle duryng my lyfe.

For now of newe for theyr prow,³
The wyfes of ful highe prudence
Have of assent made ther avow,
For to exile forever pacience,
And cryed wolves hede obedience,⁴

¹ suffering. ² dearth. ³ advantage.
⁴ outlawed obedience.

To make Chichevache faile
Of hem to fynde more vitaille.

Now Chichevache may fast longe, 120
And dye for al hir crueltee,
Wymmen hav made himself so stronge
For to outraye⁵ humylite.
O cely⁶ husbondes, wo been yee!
Suche as can have no pacience
Ageyns yowre wyfes violence.

If that ye suffre, ye be but ded,
This Bycorne awaitethe yow so sore;
Eeke of yowre wyfes ye stand in drede,
Yif ye geyn-seyn hem any more; 130
And thus ye stonde and have don yore,
Of lyfe and dethe betwixt coveyne,⁷
Lynkede in a double cheyne.

A DIETARY⁸

FOR helth of body cover for cold thyn hede;
Ete no raw mete, — take goode heede
therto;
Drynk holsom wyne; feede the on light
brede;
Withe an appetite rise from thy mete also.
In thyn age, with wymmen have thow nat
ado;
Upon thi slepe drynke nat of the cuppe;
Glad towards bedde and at morowe both to,
And use never late for to soupe.

And if it so be that lechis done the faile,
Thanne take goode [hede] and use
thynges iii, — 10
Temperat dyete, temperat travaile,
Nat malicious for none adversite;
Meke in trouble, gladde in poverte;
Riche with litel, content with suffisaunce,
Nat grucchyng,⁹ but mery like thi degre;
If phesyk lak, make this thy gover-
naunce.

To every tale, sone, yeve thow no credence;
Be nat to hasty, nor sodainly vengeable;
To poore folke do thow no violence;
Curteys of language, in spendyng mes-
urable; 20

⁵ crush. ⁶ silly, hapless. ⁷ conspiracy.

⁸ Translated from the Latin, which is given, with another version of the English, by F. J. Furnivall, *Babers Book*, p. 55, Early Eng. Text Soc., London, 1868. Our text is from the Percy Society edition of the *Minor Poems*, London, 1840, p. 66. ⁹ grumbling.

On sundry mete nat gredy at the table;
 In fedyng gentil, prudent in daliaunce;
 Close of tunge, of word nat deceyvable,
 To sey the best sette alwey thy ples-
 aunce.

Have in hate mowthes that ben double;
 Suffre at thy table no distractioun;
 Have despite of folkes that ben trouble,
 Of false rowners¹ and adulacioun;
 Withyn thy court, suffre no divisoun,
 Whiche, in thi houshold, shal cause grete
 encrese 30

Of al welfare, prosperite, and foyson;
 With thy neyghburghs lyve in rest and
 peas.

Be clenly clad after thyn estate;
 Passe nat thy bowndis, kepe thy promyse
 blyth;
 With thre folkes thow be nat at debate:
 First with thy bettir beware for to
 stryve;
 Ayenst thy felawe no quarrele thou con-
 tryve;

With thy subject to stryve it were shame:
 Wherfor I counsaile thow pursue al thy
 lyve,
 To lyve in peas and gete the a goode
 name. 40

Fuyre² at morowe, and towards bed at
 eve,
 For mystis blake, and eyre³ of pestilence;
 Betyeme at masse, thow shalt the better
 preve,
 First at thi risyng do to God reverence.
 Visite the pore, with intyre diligence;
 On al nedy have thow compassioun,
 And God shal sende grace and influence,
 To encrese the and thy possessioun.

Suffre no surfetis in thy house at nyght,
 Ware of reresoupers,⁴ and of grete ex-
 cesse, 50
 Of noddying hedys and of candel light,
 And slowth at morowe and slombering
 idelnes,
 Whiche of al vices is chief porteresse;
 Voyde al drunklew,⁵ lyers, and lechours;
 Of al unthriftes exile the mastres,
 That is to say, dyse, players, and haserd-
 ours.

¹ whisperers, tale-tellers. ² Fire. ³ air. ⁴ late suppers.
⁵ drunken persons. Strictly, "drunkenness."

After mete beware, make nat to long
 slepe;
 Hede, foote, and stomak preserve ay from
 cold;
 Be nat to pensyf, of thought⁶ take no
 kepe;
 After thy rent mayntene thyn house-
 hold, 60
 Suffre in tyme, in thi right be bold;
 Swere none othis no man to begyle,
 In thi yowth be lusty; sad⁷ whan thou
 art olde.

Dyne nat at morwe aforne thyn appetite,
 Clere eyre and walkyng makith goode
 digestioun;
 Betwene meles drynk nat for no froward
 delite
 But thurst or travaile yeve the occasioun;
 Over salt mete doth grete oppressioun
 To fieble stomakes, whan they can nat re-
 freyne,
 For nothyng more contrary to theyr com-
 plexioun; 70
 Of grepy handes the stomak hath grete
 peyne.

Thus in two thyngs standith al the welthe
 Of sowle and body, who so lust to sewe;⁸
 Moderate foode giveth to man his helthe,
 And al surfetis doth from hym remewe,
 And charite to the sowle is dewe;
 This ressayt is bought of no poticarye,
 Of mayster Antony, nor of maister Hewe;
 To al indifferent, richest diatorye.

ON WOMEN'S HORNS⁹

Of God and kynd procedyth all beaulte;
 Crafte may shew a foren apparence,
 But nature ay must haf the soveraynte.
 Thyng countirfetyd hath non existence;
 Twene gold and gossomer is gret differ-
 ence;
 Trewë metall requirith non alay;
 Unto purpose by clere experience,
 Bewtey will shewe, thow hornys be away.

⁶ anxiety. ⁷ serious. ⁸ give attention, follow.

⁹ These great horned headdresses were favorite tar-
 gets for satire. For cuts and descriptions of them see
 Mrs. C. H. Ashdown's *British Costumes*, frontispiece,
 and pp. 167 f. Our text is from *Political, Religious, and*
Love Poems, ed. F. J. Furnivall, E. E. T. Soc., 1893.
 The piece is also found in the Percy Soc. edition of the
Minor Poems, and in *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ed. Wright
 and Halliwell, London, 1841, i, 79.

Riche attyrys of gold and of perry,¹
 Charbunclys, rubeyes of most excellence, 10
 Shew in derknes lyght, whereso they be,
 By their natural hevenly influence;
 Doblettes of glasse yeve a gret evidence,
 Thyng countirfet wyl failen at assay;
 On thys mater, concludyng in sentence,
 Bewte wyll shew, thow hornes be away.

Aleyn² remembryght, hys Complaynt who
 list see,
 In hys boke of famosse eloquence;
 Cladd all in flowris, and blossommys of a
 tre,
 He saw Nature in hyr most excellence, 20
 Upon hyr hede a kerchief of valence,³
 None othyr riches of countyrfet aray;
 T'exemplifye by kyndly providence,
 Bewte wyll shew thow hornys be away.

Famosse poetys of antiquite
 In Grece and Troy, renowmyd of pru-
 dence,
 Wrote of qwene Helene, and Penolope,
 Of Policene⁴ with hyr chast innocence;
 For wyfys trew call Lucrece to presence;
 That they were fayre, ther can no man say
 nay; 30
 Kynd⁵ wrought hem with so grete dili-
 gence,
 Theyr bewte cowde shew, thow hornys were
 cast away.

Clerkes record by gret auctorite,
 Hornys wer gyffe to bestis for diffence,
 A thyng contrary to feminite,
 To be mad sturdy of resistance;
 But archwyfes, eger in ther violence,
 Fierse as a tigre forto make affray,
 They haf despyte, and agayne conscience,
 List not, of pride, theyre hornys cast
 away. 40

LENVOYE

Noble princesse, thys litell short ditye,
 Rudely compilyd, lat it be none offence
 To yowre womanly mercifull pyte,
 Thow it be radd in yowr audience.

¹ jewelry.

² Alain de l'Isle (Lille), Alanus de Insulia, wrote his *Complaint of Nature* (De Planctu Naturae) in the latter half of the twelfth century. It was extremely influential. Chaucer in the *Parliament of Fowls*, l. 316, alludes to this same description of Nature.

³ A thin, fine material. Such a kerchief is Venus's whole array in the *Parliament of Fowls*, l. 272.

⁴ Polyxena, the love of Achilles. ⁵ Nature.

Payse⁶ every thyng in yowre just adver-
 tence.

So it be no displeasance to yowre pay,⁷
 Undir support of yowr pacience,
 Yeveth example hornes to cast away.

Grettest of vertues is humilite,
 As Salamon sayth, son of Sapience, 50
 Most was accepted to the deite.
 Take hede here-of, gefe to thys word cre-
 dence,

How Maria, who had a preeminence
 Above all women, in Bedlem whan she lay,
 At Christis byrth, no cloth of gret dispen-
 ce, She weyd a keverche; hornys were cast
 away.

Of byrthe she was hyghest of degre,
 To whom all angelles did obedience,
 Of Davides lyne, which sprong out of Iesse,
 In whom all vertue is, by iust convenience 60
 Made stable in God by gostly confidence.
 This rose of Jerico, ther growth non such
 in May,
 Pure in spirite, parfite in pacience,
 In whom all hornys of pride were put away.

Moder of Ihesu, myrrour of chastite,
 In word nor thought that never did offence;
 Trew examplire of virginite,
 Hede-spryng and well of parfite continence !
 Was never clerk, by retoryk or science,
 Cowde all hyr verteus reherse to this day.
 Noble princesse, of meke benivolence, 71
 By example of hyr, yowre hornys cast away.
 Explicit.

LYDGATE'S MUMMING AT
 HERTFORD⁸

Most noble prynce, with support of your
 grace
 Ther been entred into youre royal place,
 And late coomen in to youre castell
 Yourre poure lieges, wheche lyke nothing
 weel,

⁶ Weigh.

⁷ pleasure.

⁸ This jocose piece, printed by Miss Hammond in *Anglia xxi*, p. 384 f., was written in the first quarter of the 15th century; and it is preceded by this heading: — Nowe folowethe here the maner of a bille by wey of supplicacoun putte to the Kyng, holding his noble feast of Christmase in the Castel of Hertford, as in a disguysing of the rude upplandishe people compleyn-
 ing on hir wyves. With the boystous aunswere of hir wyves. Devysed by Lydgate at the request of the Countre Roullour.

Nowe in the vigyle of this nuwe yeere
 Certeyne sweynes ful froward of ther chere
 Of entent comen, fallen on ther kne,
 For to compleyne unto yuoure magestee
 Upon the mescheef of gret aduersytee,
 Upon the trouble and the cruweltee, ¹⁰
 Which that they have endured in theyre
 lyves

By the fellesse of theyre fierce wyves;
 Which is a tourment verray importable,
 A bonde of sorowe, a knott unremuware;
 For whoo is bounde or locked in maryage,
 Yif he beo olde, he fallethe in dotage;
 And yong folkes, of theyre lymmes sklen-
 dre,

Grene and lusty and of brawne but tendre—
 Phylosophres callen in suche age
 A chyld to wyve a woodnesse¹ or a
 raage; ²⁰

For they afferme ther is noon eorthely stryff
 May bee compared to wedding of a wyff.
 And who that ever stonde the in the cas,
 He with his rebecke² may sing ful offt
 'Ellas!'

Lyke as theos hynes here standing oon by
 oon,

He may with hem upon the daunce goon,
 Leorne the traas, boothe at even and mor-
 owe,

Of Karycantowe³ in tourment and in sor-
 owe,

Weyle the whyle, ellas, that he was borne.
 For Obbe the Reeve that goothe here al to
 forne ³⁰

He pleynthe sore his mariage is not meete,
 For his wyff, Beautyrce Bittersweete,
 Cast upon him an houghly cheer⁴ ful rowghe.
 Whane he komethe home ful wery from the
 ploughe,

Whith hungry stomake, deed and paale of
 cheere,

In hope to fynde redy his dynier,
 Thanne sittethe Beautyrce bolling at the
 nale,⁵

As she that gyveth of him no maner tale;
 For she al day with hir jowsy nolle⁶
 Hathe for the collyk pouped⁷ in the bolle; ⁴⁰
 And for heedache, with pepir and gynger
 Drank drolled⁸ ale to make hir throte cleer;
 And kemethe hir hooome whane hit drawethe
 to eve.

And thanne Robyn, the cely⁹ poure Reeve,

¹ madness. ² fiddle. ³ The traas of K. is appar-
 ently the dance of the henpecked. ⁴ ugly counte-
 nance. ⁵ quaffing at the tavern. ⁶ drunken head.
⁷ tooted, gulped. ⁸ mulled. ⁹ silly, harmless.

Fynde noone amendes of harome¹⁰ ne dam-
 age,

But leene growell,¹¹ and soupethe colde pot-
 age;

And of his wyf hathe noone other cheer
 But cokkrowthes¹² unto his souper.
 This is his servyce sitting at the borde;
 And cely Robyn, yif he speke a worde, ⁵⁰
 Beautyrce of him doothe so lytel rekke
 That with hir distaff she hittethe him in the
 nekke

For a medecyne to chawf¹³ with his blood.
 With suche a metyerde¹⁴ she hathe shape
 him an hooe.¹⁵

And Colyn Cobeller, folowing his felawe,
 Hathe hade his part of the same lawe;
 For by the feyth that the preost him gaf,
 His wyff hathe taught him to pleyne at¹⁶
 the staff,

Hir quarter strookis were so large and
 rounde,

That on his rigge¹⁷ the towche was alwey
 founde. ⁶⁰

Cecely Soure-Chere, his owen precyous
 spouse,

Kowde him reheete¹⁸ whane he came to
 house.

Yif he oughit spake whanne he felt peyne,
 Ageyne on worde always he hade tweyne.
 Sheo qwytt him ever—ther was nothing to
 seeche—

Six for on of worde and strookes eche.
 Ther was no meen bytwene hem for to
 goone.

Whatever he wan clowting olde shoone
 The wykday—pleynly this is no tale—
 Sheo wolde on Sondayes drynk it at the
 nale.¹⁹ ⁷⁰

His part was noon; he sayde not onys
 nay.

Hit is no game,²⁰ but an hernest play,
 For lack of wit a man his wyf to greeve.
 Theos housbondemen—whoso wolde hem
 leewe²¹—

Koude, yif they dourst, telle in audyence
 What followthe ther, of wyves to doone
 offence.

Is noon so olde ne ryveld²² on hir face,
 Wit tong or staff but that she dare manase.
 Mabyle—God hir sauve and blesse—
 Koude, yif hir list, bere hereof wisesse. ⁸⁰

¹⁰ harm. ¹¹ gruel. ¹² heated-up vegetables.
¹³ heat. ¹⁴ measuring-stick. ¹⁵ Figuratively,
 "fooled him." ¹⁶ play at—or, possibly, complain of.
¹⁷ back. ¹⁸ comfort. The word also means assail.
¹⁹ alehouse. ²⁰ joke. ²¹ believe. ²² wrinkled.

Wordes, strookes, unhappe, and harde
 grace,

With sharp nayles kracching in the face —
 I mene thus, whane the distaff is broke

With theyre fistes wywes wol be wrooke.¹

Blessed thoo men that cane in suche offence

Meekly souffre, take al in pacyence,

Tendure suche wyfly purgatorye,

Heven for theyre meede, to regne ther in

glorie.

God graunt al housbandes that beon in this

place

To wyne so Hevon, for his hooly grace. 90

Nexst in order this bochier² stoute and

bolde,

That killed hathe bulles and boores olde,

This Berthilmewe, for al his broode knyff,

Yit durst he never with his sturdy wyff

In no mater holde chaumpartye.³

And if he did, sheo wolde anon defye

His pompe, his pryde, with a sterne thought,

And sodeynly setten him at nought.

Though he his bely were rounded lyche an

ooke, 99

She wolde not fayle to gyf the first strooke;

For pronde Pernelle lyche a chaumpoun

Wolde leve hir puddinges⁴ in a gret caw-

droun,

Suffre hem boylle and take of hem noon

heede,

But with hir skumour⁵ reeche him on the

heved.

Shee wolde paye him and make no delaye;

Bid him goo pleye him a twenty devel wey.

She was no cowarde founde at suche a

neode;

Hir fist ful offt made his cheekis bleed.

What querell ever that he agenst hir sette,

She cast hir not to dyen in his dette. 110

She made no taylle, but qwytt him by and

by;⁶

His quarter sowde⁷ she payde him feyth-

fully,

And his waages, with al hir best entent;

She made therof noon assignement.

Eeke Thomme Tynker, with alle hees pannes

olde,

And alle the wyres of Banebury that he

solde,

His styth,⁸ his hamour, his bagge portatyf,

Bare up his arme whane he faught with his

wyff —

He foonde for haste no better bokeller,
 Upon his cheke the distaff came so neer. 120

Hir name was cleped Tybot Tapister.

To brawle and broyle she nad no maner fer,

To thakke his pilche stoundemel⁹ nowe

and thanne

Thikker thane Thome koude clowten any

panne.

Nexst Colle Tyler, ful hevye of his cheer,

Compleynethe on Phelyce his wyff, the

wafurer.¹⁰

Al his bred with sugre nys not baake,

Yit on his cheekis some tyme he hathe a caake

So hoot and nuwe or he can taken heede

That his heres glowe verray reede 130

For a medecyne whane the forst is colde,

Making his teethe to ratle, that beon olde.

This is the compleynt that theos dotardes

olde

Make on theyre wywes, that beon so stoute

and bolde.

Thes holy martirs preved ful pacyent,

Lowly beseching in al hir best entent

Unto youre noble ryal magestee

To graunte hem fraunchyse, and also liber-

tee —

Sith they beothe fetird and bounden in

maryage — 139

A suaf conduyt to sauf him frome damage,

Eeke under support of youre hyeghe renoun

Graunt hem also a proteceyoun.

Conquest of wywes is rone thoroughe this

lande,

Cleyming of right to have the hyegher

hande;

But if you list of youre regallye

The olde testament for to modefy,

And that thee list asselen theyre¹¹ request,

That theos poure husbandes might lyf in

rest,

And that theyre wywes, in theyre felle

night,

Wol medie amonge mercy with theyre

right;¹² 150

For it came never of nature ne raysoun

A lyonesse t'opresse the lyoun;

Ner a wolfesse for al hir thyranny,

Over the wolf to haven the maystrye,

Ther beon nowe wolfesses moo thane twoo

or three,

The bookys¹³ recorde, wheeche that yonder

bee.

¹ avenged. ² butcher. ³ dispute the sovereignty.

⁴ sausages. ⁵ skimmer. ⁶ ran up no account

but paid instantly. ⁷ hire. ⁸ anvil.

⁹ To thwack his hide by the hour. ¹⁰ wafer-maker.

¹¹ seal or grant their (the husbands'). ¹² mingle

mercy with justice. ¹³ The MS. has *Rookys*.

Seothe¹ to this mater of mercy and of
 grace;
 And or thees dotardes parte out of this
 place,
 Upon theyre compleynt to shape remedye,
 Or they be likly to stande in jupardye, ¹⁶⁰
 It is no game with wyves for to playe,
 But for foolis that gif no force to deye.

Take the heed of th'answer of the wyves.

Touching the substaunce of this hyeghe
 discorde,

We six wyves beon ful of oon accorde.
 Yif worde and chydying may us not awaylle,
 We wol darrein² it in chaumpcloos³ by ba-
 taylle

In part⁴ oure right, laate or ellys raathe;⁵
 And for oure partye the worthy wyff of
 Bathe

Cane shewe statutes moo than six or seven,
 Howe wyves make hir housbandes wynne
 Heven, ¹⁷⁰

Maugre the feonde and al his vyolence;
 For theyre vertu of parfyte pacyence
 Partenethe not to wyves now adayes
 Sauf on theyre housbandes for to make as-
 sayes.

Ther pacyence was buried long agoo;
 Gresylde's story recordethe plainly soo.
 It longethe to us to clappen as a mylle,
 No counsyle keepe, but the trouthe oute
 telle.

We beo not borne by hevenly influence
 Of oure nature to keepe us in sylence; ¹⁸⁰
 For this is no doute — every prudent wyff
 Hathe redy aunswere in al suche maner
 stryff,

Though theos dotardes with theyre
 dokked berdes,

Which strowtethe out as they were made
 of herdes,⁶

Have ageyn hus a gret quarell now sette.
 I trowe the bakenn was never of hem fette⁷
 Awaye at Downmowe in the Pryorye.⁸
 They weene of us to have ay the mays-
 trye.

¹ Imperative of "see." ² decide.

³ Settle it in the lists. On the rights and liabilities of women in the judicial combat see H. C. Lea's *Superstition and Force* (Phil. 1892), p. 152. ⁴ On behalf of.

⁵ early. ⁶ stick out as if made of hards, flax fibres.
⁷ won by them.

⁸ An allusion to the celebrated Dunmore sitch for happy couples, given yearly ever since the early thirteenth century. Chaucer (*Wife of Bath's Prologue*, 218) and Langland (*Piers Plowman A*, X, 188) allude to it. See Skeat's note to the latter passage and the *Illustrated London News* for Aug. 24th, 1912, p. 289.

Ellas! theos foolles! Let hem aunswere here
 to,

Who cane hem wasshe who can hem wringe
 alsoo. ¹⁹⁰

Wryng hem — yee wryng — so als God us
 speed,

Til that some tyme we make hir nases
 bleed;

And sowe hir clooths whane they bethe
 to rent,

And clowthe hir bakkes til some of us be
 shent.

Loo yit theos foolles — God gyf hem sory
 chaunce!

Wolde sette hir wyves under gouvernaunce;
 Make us to hem for to lowte⁹ lowe.

We knowe to well the bent of Jackys
 bowe.

Al that we clayme, we clayme it but of
 right. ¹⁹⁹

Yif they say nay, let preve it out by fight.
 We wil us grounde not upon womanhede —

Fy on hem, cowardes! when hit komethe to
 nede —

We clayme maystrye by prescripcyoun,
 Be long tyle of successyoun

Frome wyff to wyff, which we wol not
 leese.

Men may weel grucheche,¹⁰ but they shal not
 cheese.¹¹

Custom is us for nature and usaunce
 To let oure housbandes lyf in great noy-
 saunce,

Humbelly byseching nowe at oon worde
 Unto oure liege and moost sovereign lord ²¹⁰

Us to defende of his regallye,¹²
 And of his grace susteenen oure partye,

Requering the statuyt of olde antiquyte,
 That in youre tyme it may confermed bee.

*The complainte of the lewed housbandes with
 the cruwell aunswers of theyre wyves herde, the
 kyng yivethe therupon sentence and Jugement.*

This noble Prynce, moost royal of estate,
 Having an eyeghe to this mortal debate,

First adverting of ful hyeghe prudence,
 Wil unavyssed gyve here no sentence, ²¹⁸

Witheoute counselle of haste to procede
 By sodeyne doome, for he takethe heede

To eyther partye as juge indifferent,
 Seing the paryll of hasty jugement;

Pourposithe him in this contynude stryff
 To gif no sentence therof diffynytyff

Til ther be made examynacyoun.

⁹ bow. ¹⁰ grumble. ¹¹ choose. ¹² royalty.

He considerethe and makethe raysoun his
 gyde,
 As egal juge, enclyning to noo syde,
 Notwithstanding he hathe compassyoun
 Of the poure housbandes trybulacyoun, ²²⁹
 So oft arrested with theyre wyves rokkes,¹
 Which of theyre distaves have so many
 knokkes;
 Peysing² also in his regallye
 The lawe that wymmen allegge for theyre
 partye,
 Custume, Nature, and éeke prescripacyoun,
 Statuyt used by confirmacyoun,
 Processe and daate of tyme oute of mynde,
 Recorde of cronycles, witenesse of hir
 knynde;
 Wherefore the kyng wol al this next yeere
 That wyves fraunchyse stonde hoole and
 entier;
 And that no man withstonde it, ne with-
 drawe, ²⁴⁰
 Til man may fynde some processe oute by
 lawe,
 That they should by nature in theyre lyves
 Have soverayntee on theyre prudent wyves—
 A thing unkouth, which was never founde.
 Let men be ware, therefore, or they beo
 bounde.
 The bonde is harde, who soo that lookethe
 weel.
 Some men were lever fettered beon in steel;
 Raunsoun might help his peyne to aswaage;
 But who is wedded lyvethe ever in servage;
 And I knowe never nowher, for ner neer,
 Man that was gladde to bynde him prys-
 onier, ²⁵¹
 Thoughte that his prysoun, his castell, or
 his holde,
 Wer depeynted with asure or with golde.
Explicit.

THE LEGEND OF DAN JOOS³

O WELLE of swetnesse replete in every
 veynel
 That all mankynde preservyd hast from
 dethe,
 And all oure ioy fro langour dydest restreine
 At thy Nativite, O floure of Nazareth!
 Whan the Holygost with hys swete breth

¹ distaffs.² weighing.

³ From H. N. MacCracken's edition of the *Minor Poems*, Early English Text Soc., 1911, with a few changes in typography and punctuation. A good example of Lydgate's sacred verse.

Gan to enspyre the, as for hys chosyn place,
 For love of man by influence of hys grace,

And were invyolate, O bryght hevynly
 sterre!

Mong celestynes, reynnyng without memory,
 That by thyne empyrse in thys mortall
 werre, ¹⁰

Of oure captyvyte gatest the full vyctory,
 Whom I beseche for thyne excellent glory,
 Som drope of thy grace adowne to me con-
 styll,⁴

In reverence of the thys dyte to fulfill.

That ounely my rewdenes thy myracle nat
 deface

Whyche whylom sendest in a devoute ab-
 bey,

Of an hooly monke thorough thy myght
 & grace,

That of all pyte berest bothe lok and key,
 For, benynge lady, the sothe of thee to sey,
 Full well thow quytyst that done thee love
 and serve ²⁰

An hundredy sythys⁵ bettyr then they de-
 serve.

Ensampler of whyche here ys in portreture,
 Withoutyn fable, ryght as hit was in dede,
 O refuge and welthe to every creature!
 Thy clerke to further helpe now at thys
 nede.

For to my purpose I wyll anone procede,
 The trowthe to recorde, I wyll no lengor
 tary,

Ryght as hit was, a poynt I wyll nat vary.

Vincencius in hys speculatyf historiall⁶
 Of thys sayde monke maketh full mensioun,
 Under the fourme to yow, as I reherse
 shall, ³¹

That by a gardeyne as he romyd up and
 doune

He heerd a bysshop of fame & gret re-
 nounce

Seyng v. psalmes in honour of that flowre,
 That bare Iesu Cryst oure alther redemp-
 toure.⁷

In whiche Psalmes, standyng eche in here
 degre,

Whoso lyst take hede in syngler lettres
 fyve,

⁴ distil. ⁵ times. ⁶ Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*. ⁷ Redeemer of us all.

This blessyd name MARIA there may he se
 That furst of all oure thraldam can de-
 pryve,
 To the haven of dethe when we gan ar-
 ryve,
 And fro the wawes ¹ of this mortall see,
 Made us to escape from all adversite.

Dystynctly in Latyn here may ye rede
 echone,
 Folowyng these baladys as for youre ples-
 aunce,
 To whom the bysshop hade sayde hys medi-
 tacione,
 The monke anone delytyd in his remem-
 braunce,
 And thought he wold as for his most affi-
 aunce
 Cotydyally ² with hem oonly oure lady ples-
 That fro all grevaunce hys sorowes myght
 appese.

And there withall he wrote hem in hys
 mynde,
 So stedfastly with devoute and hy corage,
 That never a day a worde he foryate be-
 hynde,
 But seyde hem enterly in-to hys last age,
 Hys olde gyltes bothe to a soft ³ and swage ⁴
 Aftyr hyr matyns, as was hys appetyte,
 To sey hem ever was hys most delyte.

Therto his dyligence with all hys hert &
 myght,
 And forthe contynuyd in his devoutest wyse,
 Tyll at last hit befell apon a nyght
 The hoole Covent at mydnyght gan aryse,
 As ys here usage, to do to God servyse. ⁶
 So when they were assemblyd there in gen-
 erall,
 The suppryour beholdyng aboute over all,

As ys hys offyce that noone of theym were
 absent,
 But of Dan Iooos he cowde no wyse aspy,
 He roose hym up and privly he went
 In-to hys chambre, and there he fond hymly
 Deede as a stoone, and lowde he gan to
 cry
 'Helpe,' quoth he, 'for the love of oure
 lady bryght,
 Dan Iooos oure brother ys sodenly dede to-
 nyght.'

¹ waves.³ Construction not clear.² Daily.⁴ assuage.

The covent anone gan renne halfe in a drede,
 Tyll they had behylde, when passyd was
 here afray,
 Owte of hys mowthe a roose boothe sprang
 and sprede,
 Fresshe in his coloure as any floure in May;
 And other tweyne out of his eyen gray;
 Of hys eares as many full fresshly flowryng
 That never yet in gardyne half so feyre
 gan spryng.

Thys rody roose they have so long beholde
 That sprang for his mowthe, tyll they have
 espyed
 Full fayre graven, in lettres of bornyd ⁶
 golde,
 MARIE full curiously as hit ys specyfied, ⁸⁰
 In bookes colde; and anone they have hem
 hyed
 Unto the temple, with lawde & hye solemp-
 nyte,
 Beryng the corse that all men myght hit se.

Whyche they kepte in ryalte & hy perfec-
 cioune
 Sevyen dayes in the tempel there beyng
 present,
 Tyll thre bysshops of fame & gret renoune
 Were comyn thedyr, ryght with devout en-
 tent,
 And many another clerk with hem by oon
 assent,
 To se thys myracle of thys lady bryght ⁹⁰
 Seying in thys wyse, with all her ⁶ hert and
 myght:

'Lawde, honour, pryce, and hygh reverence
 Eternally be to thee, O hevynly Iuge,
 And to thy modyr that of her gret benyvo-
 lence
 Preserveth from hevynes, in this derke del-
 uge,
 That ⁷ doone her magnify, and ys her hoole
 refuge;
 More then they serve ⁸ sche quyeth a thou-
 sand folde,
 Hyr passyng goodnes of us may nat be
 tolde.'

Thus when these bysshops & clerkis many
 oon
 Had thankyd God, as ferforth as they can, ⁹⁹
 And thys lady that hathe thys grace
 ydoon,

⁵ burnished. ⁶ their. ⁷ Those that. ⁸ deserve.

So full of ioy and blysse was every man
 Of thys myracle, that syth the world began
 Yet herde I never in roundell,¹ prose ne
 ryme,
 Of halfe the gladnes pat was withyn hem
 that tyme.

Sone aftyr thys her iorney gan they holde,
 Eche in hys syde,² in-to hys propre place.
 Ryght as they fonde overall so have they
 tolde
 Of thys holy Monke, O lady full of grace!
 Now well ys hym, that can hys hert en-
 brace,
 To love the best and chaunge for no new,
 That art so feythfull thow canst nat be un-
 trew.

O ye fressche lovers, that lyvyn ever in
 doublesse,
 And hurt your-self full oft with your owne
 knyfe,
 Your wofull ioy ys medlyd³ ay with byttyr-
 nesse,
 Now glad, now sory, now lyte, now pen-
 syfe,
 Thus with your-self ye fall ever at stryfe,
 Betwene two wawes ay possyd⁴ to and fro,
 That in contraryosnes ye stryvyn evyr mo.

Youre blynde fantasyes now in hertes
 weyve,⁵
 Of chyldysshe vanyte and let hem over-
 slyde,

¹ song.² in his own direction.³ mingled.⁴ pushed.⁵ give up.

And loveth this lady, that can nowyse de-
 ceyve,
 She ys so stedfast of hert in every syde,
 That for your nedys so modyrly can pro-
 vyde
 And for your pousy these lettres fyve ye
 take,
 Of thys name MARIA oonly for hys sake.

That for youre travayle so well [will] yow
 avaunce,
 Nat as these wemen on the⁶ whyche ye doon
 delyte,
 That fedyn yow all day with feynyd pleas-
 aunce,
 Hyd undyr tresoun with many wordys
 whyte,
 But bet then ye deserve she woll yow
 quyte,
 And for ye shall nat labour all in veyne,
 Ye shall have heven; there ys nomore to
 seyne;

Whos passyng goodnes may nat be compre-
 hendyd,
 In mannys prudence fully to determyne,
 She ys so parfyte she cannat be amendyd,
 That ay to mercy and pyty doth enclyne.
 Now benygne lady that dedystoure sorowes
 fyne
 In honour of the that done thy psalmes
 rede
 As was Dan Iooos, so quyte hem for theyre
 mede.

Amen.¹⁴⁰⁶ ye in MacCracken.

JOHN SKELTON

PHILIP SPARROW¹

*Pla ce bo,*²

Who is there, who ?

*Di le xi,*³

Dame Margery;

Fa, re, my, my,

Wherefore and why, why ?

For the soul of Philip Sparrow,

That was late slain at Carow,

Among the Nunes Black,

For that sweet soul's sake,

And for all sparrows' souls,

Set in our beadrolls,

Pater noster qui,

With an *Ave Mari,*

And with the corner of a Creed,

The more shall be your meed.

Whan I remember again

How my Philip was slain,

Never half the pain

Was between you twain,

Piramus and Thisbe,

As than befell to me:

I wept and I wailed;

The tears down hailed;

But nothing it availed;

To call Philip again,

Whom Gib our cat hath slain.

Gib, I say, our cat

Worwowed⁴ her on that

Which I loved best:

It can not be expressed

My sorrowful heaviness,

But all without redress;

For within that stound,

Half slumbring, in a swoond

I fell down to the ground.

¹ This sparkling piece is an elegy for the death of Mistress Jane Scrope's pet sparrow. Such mock elegies, though shorter, had been in vogue since Catullus' lament for his Lesbia's sparrow (c. 60 B.C.), and very likely for longer; and such travesties of church rites were far from rare in the Middle Ages. The small nunnery of the Benedictines at Carow, near Norwich, was probably a sort of boarding-school where Jane and the other well-to-do young ladies of the neighbourhood were educated.

² So begins a verse in the Office for the Dead—*Psalm* cxvi (Vulgate cxlv), 9.

³ *Psalm*s, cxvi, 1. Cf. last note. ⁴ worried.

Unneth⁵ I kest mine eyes

Toward the cloudy skies:

But whan I did behold

My sparrow dead and cold,

No creature but that wold

Have rewed⁶ upon me,

To behold and see

What heaviness did me pang;

Wherewith my hands I wrang,

That my sinews cracked,

As though I had been racked,

So pained and so strained,

That no life wellnigh remained.

I sighed and I sobbed,

For that I was robbed

Of my sparrow's life.

O maiden, widow, and wife,

Of what estate ye be,

Of high or low degree,

Great sorrow than ye might see

And learn to weep at⁷ me!

Such pains did me freat,⁸

That mine heart did beat,

My visage pale and dead,

Wan, and blue as lead;

The pangs of hateful death

Wellnigh had stopped my breath.

Heu, heu, me,

That I am woe for thee!

*Ad Dominum, cum tribularer, clamavi.*⁹

Of God nothing else crave I

But Philip's soule to keep

From the mares¹⁰ deep

Of Acherontes well,

That is a flood of Hell;

And from the great Pluto,

The prince of endless woe;

And from foul Alecto,

With visage black and blo;¹¹

And from Medusa, that mare,¹²

That like a fiend doth stare:

And from Megeras edders,¹³

For ruffling of Philip's feathers,

And from her fiery sparklings,

From burning of his wings;

⁵ With difficulty. ⁶ had pity. ⁷ from. ⁸ fret, gnaw.

⁹ I cried unto the Lord when I was in trouble.

¹⁰ marsh. ¹¹ blue. ¹² spectre. ¹³ adders.

And from the smokes sour
Of Proserpina's bower;
And from the dens dark,
Where Cerberus doth bark,
Whom Theseus did affray,
Whom Hercules did outray,¹
As famous poets say;
From that hell hound,
That lieth in chaines bound,
With ghastly heades three,
To Jupiter pray we
That Philip preserved may be!
Amen, say ye with me!

Do mi nus,
Help now, sweet Jesus!
*Levavi oculos meos in montes:*²
Wolde God I had Zenophontes,³
Or Socrates the wise,
To shew me their devise,
Moderately to take
This sorrow that I make
For Philip Sparrow's sake!
So fervently I shake,
I feel my body quake;
So urgently I am brought
Into careful thought.⁴
Like Andromach, Hector's wife,
Was weary of her life,
When she had lost her joy,
Noble Hector of Troy;
In like manner also
Encreaseth my deadly woe,
For my sparrow is go.

It was so pretty a fool,
It wold sit on a stool,
And learned after my school
For to keep his cut,⁵
With, Philip, keep your cut!

It had a velvet cap,
And would sit upon my lap,
And seek after small worms,
And sometime white bread crumbs;
And many times and oft
Between my breastes soft
It would lie and rest;
It was proper and prest.⁶

Sometime he would gasp
When he saw a wasp;
A fly or a gnat,
He would fly at that;
And prettily he would pant
When he saw an ant;

Lord, how he would pry
After the butterfly!
Lord, how he would hop
After the grasshop!
And whan I said, Phip, Phip,
Than he would leap and skip,
And take me by the lip.
Alas, it will me slo,⁷
That Philip is gone me fro!

Sin in i qui ta tes
Alas, I was evil at ease!
De pro fun dis cla ma vi,
When I saw my sparrow die!
Now, after my dome,⁸
Dame Sulpicia,⁹ at Rome,
Whose name registered was
For ever in tables of brass,
Because that she did pass
In poesy to endite,
And eloquently to write,
Though she would pretend
My sparrow to commend,
I trow she could not amend
Reporting the virtues all
Of my sparrow royal.

For it would come and go,
And fly so to and fro;
And on me it would leap
When I was asleep,
And his feathers shake,
Wherewith he would make
Me often for to wake,
And for to take him in
Upon my naked skin;
God wot, we thought no sin:
What though he crept so low?
It was not hurt, I trow;
He did nothing perdie
But sit upon my knee,
Philip, though he were nice,
In him it was no vice;
Philip had leave to go
To pick my little toe;
Philip might be bold
And do what he wold;
Philip would seek and take
All the fleas black
That he could there espy
With his wanton eye.

O pe ra,
La, soll, fa, fa,
Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo.
Alas, I would ride and go

¹ vanquish. ² I lifted mine eyes unto the moun-
tains. ³ Xenophon. ⁴ melancholy. ⁵ distance.
⁶ clean and tidy.

⁷ slay. ⁸ judgment.
⁹ An amorous poetess of Domitian's reign.

A thousand mile of ground !
 If any such might be found,
 It were worth an hundred pound
 Of king Cræsus' gold, 190
 Or of Attalus the old,
 The rich prince of Pargamee,¹
 Who so list the story to see.
 Cadmus, that his sister² sought,
 And he should be bought
 For gold and fee,
 He should over the sea,
 To wete³ if he could bring
 Any of the offspring,
 Or any of the blood,⁴ 200
 But whoso understood
 Of Medea's art,
 I would I had a part
 Of her crafty magic !
 My sparrow then should be quick
 With a charm or twain,
 And play with me again.
 But all this is in vain
 Thus for to complain.

I took my sampler once, 210
 Of purpose, for the nonce,
 To sew with stitches of silk
 My sparrow white as milk,
 That by representation
 Of his image and fashion,
 To me it might import
 Some pleasure and comfort
 For my solace and sport:
 But when I was sewing his beak,
 Methought my sparrow did speak, 220
 And opened his pretty bill,
 Saying, 'Maid, ye are in will⁵
 Again me for to kill,
 Ye prick me in the head !'
 With that my needle waxed red,
 Methought, of Philip's blood;
 Mine hair right upstood,
 And was in such affray,⁶
 My speech was taken away.
 I cast down that there was, 230
 And said, 'Alas, alas,
 How cometh this to pass ?'
 My fingers, dead and cold,
 Could not my sampler hold;
 My needle and thread
 I threw away for dread.

The best now that I may,
 Is for his soul to pray :
A porta inferi,
 Good Lord, have mercy 240
 Upon my sparrow's soul,
 Written in my beadroll !
Au di vi vo cem,
 Japhet, Cam, and Sem,⁷
Ma gni fi cat,
 Shew me the right path
 To the hills of Armony,⁸
 Wherefore the birds yet cry⁹
 Of your father's boat,
 That was sometime afloat, 250
 And now they lie and rot.
 Let some poets write
 Deucalion's flood it hight ;
 But as verily as ye be
 The natural sones three
 Of Noe the patriarch,
 That made that great ark,
 Wherein he had apes and owls,
 Beasts, birds, and fowls,
 That if ye can find 260
 Any of my sparrow's kind,
 God send the soul good rest !
 I would have yet a nest
 As pretty and as prest¹⁰
 As my sparrow was.
 But my sparrow did pass
 All the sparrows of the wood
 That were since Noe's flood,
 Was never none so good ;
 King Philip of Macedon. 270
 Had no such Philip as I,
 No, no, sir, hardly.¹¹

That vengeance I ask and cry,
 By way of exclamation,
 On all the whole nation
 Of cats wild and tame;
 God send them sorrow and shame !
 That cat specially
 That slew so cruelly 280
 My little pretty sparrow
 That I brought up at Carow.
 O cat of carlish¹² kind,
 The fiend was in thy mind
 When thou my bird untwined !¹³
 I would thou haddest been blind !
 The leopards savage,
 The lions in their rage,

¹ Pergamus. ² Europa. ³ know.

⁴ This appears to mean: If Cadmus, the great searcher, could by any means be had, over the sea he should be sent in order to seek the offspring or blood relations of my lost sparrow; so that I might keep up the prized stock. ⁵ intending. ⁶ fright.

⁷ Ham and Shem.

⁸ Armenia, where the ark grounded.

⁹ Text doubtful; possibly we should read "whereon the borders yet lie." Dyce.

¹⁰ tidy. ¹¹ certainly. ¹² churlish. ¹³ killed.

Might catch thee in their paws,
And gnaw thee in their jaws!
The serpents of Libany¹
Might sting thee venomously!
The dragous with their tongues
Might poison thy liver and lungs!
The manticores² of the mountains
Might feed them on thy brains!

290

Melanchates,³ that hound
That plucked Acteon to the ground,
Gave him his mortal wound,
Changed to a deer,
The story doth appear,
Was changed to an hart:
So thou, foul cat that thou art
The self same hound
Might thee confound,
That his own lord bote,⁴
Might bite asunder thy throat!

300

Of Inde the greedy gripes!⁵
Might tear out all thy tripes!
Of Arcady the bears
Might pluck away thine ears!
The wild wolf Lycaon⁶
Bite asunder thy backbone!
Of Etna the brenning hill,
That day and night brenneth still
Set in thy tail a blaze,
That all the world may gaze
And wonder upon thee,
From Ocean the great sea
Unto the Isles of Orcady,
From Tilbury Ferry
To the plain of Salisbury!
So traitorously my bird to kill
That never ought⁷ thee evil will!

310

320

Was never bird in cage
More gentle of courage
In doing his homage
Unto his sovereign.
Alas, I say again,
Death hath departed us twain!
The false cat hath thee slain:
Farewell, Philip, adieu!
Our Lord thy soul rescue!
Farewell without restore,
Farewell for evermore!
And it were a Jew,
It would make one rue,
To see my sorrow new.

330

These villanous false cats
Were made for mice and rats,
And not for birdes small.
Alas, my face waxeth pale,
Telling this piteous tale,
How my bird so fair,
That was wont to repair,
And go in at my spare,⁸
And creep in at my gore⁹
Of my gown before,
Flickering with his wings.
Alas, my heart it stings,
Remembring pretty things!
Alas, mine heart it slayth,
My Philip's doleful death,
When I remember it,
How prettily it would sit,
Many times and oft
Upon my finger aloft!
I played with him tittle tattle,
And fed him with my spattle,¹⁰
With his bill betweene my lips;
It was my pretty Phipps!
Many a pretty kuss¹¹
Had I of his sweet muss;¹²
And now the cause is thus,
That he is slain me fro,
To my great pain and woe,
Of fortune this the chance
Standeth on variance:
Oft time after pleasance
Trouble and grievance;
No man can be sure
Always to have pleasure:
As well perceive ye may
How my disport and play
From me was taken away
By Gib, our cat savage,
That in a furious rage
Caught Philip by the head,
And slew him there stark dead.

340

350

360

370

380

Kyrie, eleison,
Christe, eleison,
Kyrie, eleison!¹³
For Philip Sparrow's soul,
Set in our beadroll,
Let us now whisper
A Pater noster.

Lauda, anima mea, Dominum!¹⁴
To weep with me look that ye come,
All manner of birds in your kind;
See none be left behind.

¹ Libya. ² An extraordinary fabulous beast.

³ So the foremost hound is named in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, III, 232.

⁴ bit.

⁵ griffins, or vultures.

⁶ A king of Arcadia transformed into a wolf. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I, 163.

⁷ owed.

⁸ slit in the top of a skirt. ⁹ opening in the breast.
¹⁰ spittle. ¹¹ kiss. ¹² beak, mouth.

¹³ Part of the Mass — "Lord (Christ), have mercy!"
¹⁴ Praise the Lord, oh my soul.

To mourning look that ye fall 390
 With dolorous songs funeral,
 Some to sing, and some to say,
 Some to weep, and some to pray,
 Every bird in his lay.
 The goldfinch, the wagtail;
 The jangling jay to rail,
 The flecked pye to chatter
 Of this dolorous matter;
 And robin redbreast,
 He shall be the priest 400
 The requiem mass to sing,
 Softly warbeling,
 With help of the red sparrow,
 And the chatt'ring swallow,
 This hearse¹ for to hallow;
 The lark with his long toe;
 The spink,² and the martinet³ also;
 The shoveler⁴ with his broad beak;
 The doterell,⁵ that foolish peak,⁶
 And also the mad coot, 410
 With a bald face to toot;
 The feldfare, and the snite;⁷
 The crow, and the kite;
 The raven, called Rolfe,
 His plain-song to solfe;⁸
 The partridge, the quail;
 The plover with us to wail;
 The woodhack,⁹ that singeth chur
 Hoarsely, as he had the mur:¹⁰
 The lusty chanting nightingale; 420
 The poppingay,¹¹ to tell her tale,
 That toteth¹² oft in a glass,
 Shall read the Gospel at mass;
 The mavis with her whistle
 Shall read there the pistle.¹³
 But with a large and a long¹⁴
 To keep just plain-song,
 Our chanters shall be the cuckoo,
 The culver,¹⁵ the stockdove,
 With pewit the lapwing, 430
 The versicles shall sing.
 The bitter with his bump,¹⁶
 The crane with his trump,
 The swan of Menander,¹⁷
 The goose and the gander,
 The duck and the drake,
 Shall watch at this wake;

The peacock so proud,
 Because his voice is loud,
 And hath a glorious tail, 440
 He shall sing the grail;¹⁸
 The owl, that is so foul,
 Must help us to howl;
 The heron so gaunce¹⁹
 And the cormorance,²⁰
 With the pheasant,
 And the gagging gant²¹
 And the churlish chough;
 The route²² and the kowgh;²³
 The barnacle,²⁴ the buzzard, 450
 With the wild mallard;
 The divendop²⁵ to sleep;
 The water-ben to weep;
 The puffin and the teal
 Money they shall deal
 To poor folk at large,
 That shall be their charge;
 The seamew and the titmose;²⁶
 The woodcock with the long nose;
 The threstle with her warbling; 460
 The starling with her brabbling;²⁷
 The rook, with the osprey
 That putteth fishes to affray;
 And the dainty curlew,
 With the turtle most true.

At this *Placebo*

We may not well forego
 The councing of the coe:²⁸
 The stork also,
 That maketh his nest 470
 In chimneys to rest;
 Within those walls
 No broken galls
 May there abide
 Of cuckoldry side,
 Of else philosophy
 Maketh a great lie.²⁹
 The estrige,³⁰ that will eat
 An horseshoe so great,
 In the stead of meat, 480
 Such fervent heat
 His stomack doth freat;³¹
 He can not well fly,
 Nor sing tunably,

¹⁸ gradual, so called because sung at the altar steps.

¹⁹ gaunt. ²⁰ cormorant. ²¹ cackling gannet.

²² wild goose? Cf. *New Eng. Dict.*, rout, sb. 7.

²³ Variant of chough, i.e. another of the crow family?

²⁴ barnacle goose. ²⁵ dabchick or didapper. Liter-

ally "diver-and-dipper."

²⁶ The proper form of titmouse. ²⁷ scolding.

²⁸ Apparently the jackdaw, chough—or one of his relatives—yet a third time in this list!

²⁹ Where storks nest there can be no marital infidelity.

³⁰ ostrich. ³¹ fret, bite. Skelton spells it also *frete*.

¹ bier. ² chaffinch. ³ martin. ⁴ spoonbill duck.

⁵ A sort of plover easily captured. ⁶ dolt. ⁷ snipe.

⁸ solfa, i. e., sing the scale. ⁹ woodpecker.

¹⁰ a cold. ¹¹ parrot. ¹² peeks. ¹³ epistle. ¹⁴ one

large note contained two *longs*. ¹⁵ wood-pigeon.

¹⁶ The bittorn, who makes a bumping or booming

noise.

¹⁷ This stands for the river Meander here and else-

where in Skelton.

Yet at a braid¹
 He hath well assayed
 To solfe above ela,²
 Ga, lorell,³ fa, fa;
Ne quando
Male cantando, 490
 The best that we can,
 To make him our bellman,
 And let him ring the bells;
 He can do nothing else.⁴
 Chaunteclere, our cock,
 Must tell what is of the clock
 By the astrology
 That he hath naturally
 Conceived and caught,
 And was never taught 500
 By Albumazer⁵
 The astronomer,
 Nor by Ptolemy⁶
 Prince of astronomy,
 Nor yet by Haly;⁷
 And yet he croweth daily
 And nightly the tides
 That no man abides,
 With Partlot his hen,
 Whom now and then 510
 He plucketh by the head
 Whan he doth her tread.
 The bird of Araby,
 That potentially
 May never die,
 And yet there is none
 But one alone;
 A phoenix it is
 This hearse⁸ that must bliss 520
 With aromatic gums
 That cost great sums,
 The way of thurification⁹
 To make a fumigation,
 Sweet of reffair,¹⁰
 And redolent of air,
 This corse for to cense
 With great reverence,
 As patriarch or pope
 In a black cope;
 Whiles he censeth the herse, 530
 He shall sing the verse,
Libera me,
 In de, la, sol, re,

Softly bemole,¹¹
 For my sparrow's soul.
 Pliny sheweth all
 In his story natural¹²
 What he doth find
 Of the phoenix kind;
 Of whose incineration 540
 There riseth a new creation
 Of the same fashion
 Without alteration,
 Saving that old age
 Is turned into courage
 Of fresh youth again;
 This matter true and plain,
 Plain matter indeed,
 Whoso list to read.

But for the eagle doth fly 550
 Highest in the sky,
 He shall be the sedean,¹³
 The quere¹⁴ to demean,¹⁵
 As provost principal,
 To teach them their ordinal;
 Also the noble falcon¹⁶
 With the ger falcon¹⁷
 The tercel gentle,¹⁸
 They shall mourn soft and still
 In their amice¹⁹ of gray; 560
 The sacre²⁰ with them shall say
Dirige, for Philip's soul;
 The goshawk²¹ shall have a roll
 The queresters to control;
 The lanners²² and the merlions²³
 Shall stand in their mourning gowns;
 The hobby²⁴ and the musket²⁵
 The censers and the cross shall fet;²⁶
 The kestrel²⁷ in all this work 570
 Shall be holy-water clerk.

And now the dark cloudy night
 Chaseth away Phebus bright,
 Taking his course toward the west,
 God send my sparrow's soul good rest!
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine!
 Fa, fa, fa, my, re, re,
A por ta in fe ri,
 Fa, fa, fa, my, my.
Credo videre bona Domini,
 I pray God, Philip to heaven may fly! 580

¹ at a pinch. ² To sing above the highest note
 in the scale. ³ rogue.
⁴ Alluding to some popular saying like "who cannot
 sing, let him ring."
⁵ An Arabian of the ninth century.
⁶ Of the celebrated Ptolemaic system.
⁷ Another great Arabian astronomer of c. 1100.
⁸ bier. ⁹ censsing, incense-burning. ¹⁰ perfume.

¹¹ Flat.
¹² Pliny's *Natural History*, Bk. X, § 2. ¹³ subdean.
¹⁴ choir. ¹⁵ conduct. ¹⁶ peregrine falcon.
¹⁷ The great white or gray Norway falcon.
¹⁸ The male of a peregrine falcon.
¹⁹ One of the priest's vestments.
²⁰ A somewhat smaller falcon.
²¹ large, short-winged hawk.
²² These are all lesser kinds of hawks and falcons.
²³ fetch.

Domine, exaudi orationem meam!
To heaven he shall, from heaven he
came!

Do mi nus vo bis cum!
Of all good prayers God send him some!
Oremus.

Deus, cui, proprium est misereri et parcere,
On Philip's soul have pity!
For he was a pretty cock,
And came of a gentle stock,
And wrapt in a maiden's smock, 590
And cherished full daintily,
Till cruel fate made him to die.
Alas, for doleful destiny!
But whereto should I
Lenger mourn or cry?
To Jupiter I call,
Of heaven emperial,
That Philip may fly
Above the starry sky,
To tread the pretty wren,
That is our Lady's hen:
Amen, amen, amen!

Yet one thing is behind,
That now cometh to mind;
An epitaph, I would have
For Philip's grave:
But for I am a maid,
Timorous, half afraid,
That never yet assayed
Of Helicones well, 610
Where the Muses dwell;
Though I can read and spell,
Recount, report, and tell
Of the Tales of Canterbury,
Some sad stories, some merry
As Palamon and Arcet,
Duke Theseus, and Partelet;
And of the Wife of Bath,
That worketh much scath
When her tale is told 630
Among husewives bold,
How she controlled
Her husbands as she wold,
And them to despise
In the homliest wise,
Bring other wives in thought
Their husbands to set at nought;
And though that read have I
Of Gawain and Sir Guy,
And tell can a great piece
Of the Golden Fleece,
How Jason it wan,
Like a valiant man;
Of Arthur's round table,

With his knights commendable,
And dame Gaynour,¹ his queen,
Was somewhat wanton, I ween;
How Sir Lancelot de Lake
Many a spear brake
For his lady's sake; 640
Of Tristram, and King Mark,
And all the whole wark²
Of Bele Isold his wife,
From whom was much strife;
Some say she was light,
And made her husband knight
Of the common hall,
That cuckolds men call;
And of Sir Lybius,
Named Disconius;³ 650
Of Quater Filz Amund,⁴
And how they were summoned
To Rome, to Charlemagne,
Upon a great pain,
And how they rode each one
On Bayard Mountalbon;⁵ 660

Men see him now and then
In the forest of Arden:
What though I can frame
The stories by name 660
Of Judas Maccabeus,
And of Caesar Julius;
And of the love between
Paris and Vienne;⁶
And of the Duke Hannibal,
That made the Romans all
Fordread and to quake;
How Scipion did wake⁷
The city of Carthage,
Which by his unmerciful rage 670
He beat down to the ground:
And though I can expound
Of Hector of Troy,
That was all their joy,
Whom Achilles slew,
Wherefore all Troy did rue;
And of the love so hote
That made Troilus to dote
Upon fair Cressid,
And what they wrote and said, 680
And of their wanton wills
Pandare bare the bills

¹ Guinevere.

² work.

³ The English romance of *Libeaus Desconus* (The Fair Unknown) may be found in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*, vol. 2.

⁴ *Les Quatre Fils Aimon* is a thirteenth-century *chanson de geste*, of which Caxton printed a prose version.

⁵ The celebrated steed Bayard of Montauban, whom on this occasion carried all the four brothers at once.

⁶ Caxton printed this prose romance. ⁷ watch.

From one to the other;
His master's love to further,
Sometime a precious thing,
An ouche,¹ or else a ring;
From her to him again
Sometime a pretty chain,
Or a bracelet of her hair,
Prayed Troilus for to wear 690
That token for her sake;
How heartily he did it take,
And much thereof did make.
And all that was in vain,
For she did but feign;
The story telleth plain,
He could not obtain,
Though his father were a king.
Yet there was a thing
That made the male to wring;² 700
She made him to sing
The song of lovers' lay;³
Musing night and day,
Mourning all alone,
Comfort he had none,
For she was quite gone;
Thus in conclusion,
She brought him in abusion;
In earnest and in game
She was much to blame;
Disparaged is her fame,
And blemished is her name,
In manner half with shame;
Troilus also hath lost
On her much love and cost,
And now must kiss the post;⁴
Pandare, that went between,
Hath won nothing, I ween,
But light for summer green;⁵ 720
Yet for a special laud
He is named Troilus' bawd,
Of that name he is sure
Whiles the world shall dure:
Though I remember the fable
Of Penelope most stable
To her husband most true
Yet long time she ne knew
Whether he were on live⁶ or dead;
Her wit stood her in stead,

That she was true and just 730
For any bodily lust
To Ulysses her make,⁷
And never would him forsake:
Of Marcus Marcellus⁸
A process⁹ I could tell us;
And of Antiochus;¹⁰
And of Josephus
De Antiquitatibus;¹¹
And of Mardocheus,¹²
And of great Assuerus, 740
And of Vesca his queen,
Whom he forsook with teen,¹³
And of Hester his other wife,
With whom he led a pleasant life;
Of king Alexander;
And of king Evander;¹⁴
And of Porsena¹⁵ the great,
That made the Romans to sweat:
Though I have enrolled
A thousand new and old 750
Of these historious tales,
To fill budgets and males¹⁶
With books that I have read,
Yet I am nothing sped,
And can but little skill
Of Ovid or Virgil,
Or of Plutarch,
Or Francis Petrarch,
Alceus or Sappho,
Or such other poets mo,¹⁷ 760
As Linus and Homerus,
Euphorion and Theocritus,
Anacreon and Arion,
Sophocles and Philemon,
Pindarus and Simonides,
Philistion and Phorocides;¹⁸
These poets of aunciency,¹⁹
They are too diffuse for me:
For, as I tofore have said,
I am but a young maid, 770
And cannot in effect
My style as yet direct
With English words elect:
Our natural tongue is rude,
And hard to be enneude²⁰

¹ jewel, ornament.
² This popular expression appears to mean "cause trouble."
³ Lovers' law (Dyce), or lovers' tune — the lovers being of course jilted.
⁴ Lose, fall — a popular saying.
⁵ Obscure. A light-for-summer, green fabric? Chaucer's poorly clad Canon rode "all light for summer," Prologue to *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, l. 16. Green is the color of inconstancy.
⁶ alive.

⁷ mate. ⁸ Ofttimes consul, conqueror of Syracuse, slain by Hannibal, 208 B.C. ⁹ story.
¹⁰ See *Confessio Amantis*, Bk. viii, 271 ff., and Shakespeare's *Pericles*.
¹¹ *The Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus's great chronicle.
¹² Mordecai, with Ahasuerus, Vashti, and Esther.
¹³ annoyance.
¹⁴ The friend of Æneas in Bk. viii, l. 51.
¹⁵ The Etruscan who conquered Rome.
¹⁶ mails, i.e., bags. ¹⁷ more. ¹⁸ Pherecydes, early Greek philosopher. ¹⁹ antiquity.
²⁰ adorned, from *en-* and *Fr. nuer*, to tint.

With polished terms lusty;
 Our language is so rusty,
 So cankered, and so full
 Of frowards,¹ and so dull,
 That if I would apply 780
 To write ornately,
 I wot not where to find
 Terms to serve my mind
 Gower's English is old,
 And of no value told;
 His matter is worth gold,
 And worthy to be enrolled.
 In Chaucer I am sped,
 His tales I have read:
 His matter is delectable, 790
 Solacious,² and commendable;
 His English well allowed,³
 So as it is enpowred,⁴
 For as it is employed,
 There is no English void,⁵
 At those days much commended;
 And now men would have amended
 His English, whereat they bark,
 And mar all they wark:
 Chaucer, that famous clerk, 800
 His terms were not dark,
 But pleasant, easy, and plain;
 No word he wrote in vain.

Also John Lydgate
 Writeth after an higher rate;⁶
 It is diffuse⁷ to find
 The sentence⁸ of his mind,
 Yet writeth he in his kind,
 No man that can amend
 Those matters that he hath penned;⁹ 810
 Yet some men find a fault,
 And say he writeth too haut.⁹

Wherefore hold me excused
 If I have not well perused
 Mine English half abused;
 Though it be refused,
 In worth¹⁰ I shall it take,
 And fewer wordes make.

But, for my sparrow's sake,
 Yet as a woman may, 820
 My wit I shall assay
 An epitaph to write
 In Latin plain and light,
 Whereof the elegy
 Followeth by and by:¹¹

Flos volucrum formose, vale!
 Philippe, sub isto
 Marmore jam recubas,
 Qui mihi carus eras. 830
 Semper erunt nitido
 Radiantia sidera caelo;
 Impressusque meo
 Pectore semper eris.
 Per me laurigerum
 Britonum Skeltonida vatem
 Haec cecinisse licet
 Ficta sub imagine texta.
 Cujus eras volucris,
 Praestanti corpore virgo;
 Candida Nais erat, 840
 Formosior ista Joanna est;
 Docta Corinna fuit,
 Sed magis ista sapit.
 Bien men souient.¹²

THE TUNNING OF ELEANOR RUMMING¹³

TELL you I chill,¹⁴
 If that ye will
 A while be still,
 Of a comely gill,¹⁵
 That dwelt on a hill:
 But she is not grill,¹⁶
 For she is somewhat sage
 And well worn in age;
 For her visage
 It would assuage 10
 A man's courage.
 Her loathly lere¹⁷
 Is nothing clear,
 But ugly of cheer,
 Droopy and drowsy,
 Seurvy and lousy;
 Her face all bousy,¹⁸
 Comely crinkled,
 Wondrously wrinkled,
 Like a roast pig's ear, 20
 Bristled with hair.

¹² The *Commendations* and the *Addition*, about 500 lines in all, now follow; but they mar the poem.

¹³ Tunning is brewing. For entertaining gossip concerning Eleanor see Dyce's notes. Such pictures of tavern-baunting women are common in the Middle Ages: the most powerfully drawn are Watrquet de Couvin's *Trois Dames de Paris* (c. 1320) in Montaiglon and Raynaud's *Fabliaux*, III, 145; and Langland's *Piers Plowman*, A text, V, 146 f; the pleasantest is Dunbar's *Ballad of Kind Kittok*. ¹⁴ for *Ich will*, — with dialect form of the pronoun. ¹⁵ wench. ¹⁶ cross.

¹⁷ face. ¹⁸ as of one that boozes.

¹ perversities. ² Entertaining. ³ approved.

⁴ improved, i.e., made good use of, received and treated properly. ⁵ For as Chaucer employed it, no

English is lacking, there is no flaw in the language.

⁶ Apparently, in a higher style. ⁷ uncertain, difficult.

⁸ meaning. ⁹ loftily. ¹⁰ Contentedly. ¹¹ straightway.

Her nose somedeal hooked,
 And camously crooked,¹
 Never stopping,
 But ever dropping; 30
 Her skin loose and slack,
 Grained like a sack;
 With a crooked back.
 Her eyen goundy²
 Are full unsoundy,
 For they are bleared;
 And she gray haired;
 Jawed like a jetty;³
 A man would have pity
 To see how she is gummed, 40
 Fingered and thumbed,
 Gently jointed,
 Greased and anointed
 Up to the knuckles;
 The bones of her huckles⁴
 Like as they were with buckles
 Together made fast:
 Her youth is far past:
 Footed like a plane,⁵ 50
 Legged like a crane;
 And yet she will jet;⁶
 Like a jolly fet,⁷
 In her furred flocket,⁸
 And gray russet rocket,⁹
 With simper the cocket.¹⁰
 Her huke¹¹ of Lincoln green,
 It had been hers, I ween,
 More than fourty year;
 And so doth it appear, 60
 For the green bare threads
 Look like sere weeds,
 Withered like hay,
 The wool worn away;
 And yet I dare say
 She thinketh herself gay
 Upon the holy day,
 Whan she doth her array,
 And girdeth in her gytes¹²
 Stitched and pranked with pleats;
 Her kirtle Bristow red, 70
 With cloths upon her head
 That weigh a sow¹³ of lead,
 Writhen¹⁴ in wonder wise,
 After the Saracens' guise,
 With a whim wham,
 Knit with a trim tram,

Upon her brain pan,
 Like an Egyptian,¹⁵
 Capped about:
 Whan she goeth out 80
 Herself for to shew,
 She driveth down the dew
 With a pair of heels
 As broad as two wheels;
 She hobbles as a goose
 With her blanket hose
 Over the fallow;
 Her shoon smeared with tallow,
 Greased upon dirt
 That baudeth¹⁶ her skirt. 90

Primus passus

And this comely dame,
 I understand, her name
 Is Eleanor Rumming,
 At home in her wonning;¹⁷
 And as men say
 She dwelt in Sothray,¹⁸
 In a certain stead
 Beside Leatherhead.
 She is a tonnish gib;¹⁹ 100
 The devil and she be sib.

But to make up my tale,
 She breweth nopp²⁰ ale,
 And maketh therof port sale²¹
 To travellers, to tinkers,
 To sweaters, to swinkers,²²
 And all good ale drinkers,
 That will nothing spare,
 But drink till they stare
 And bring themself bare,
 With, Now away the mare, 110
 And let us slay care,
 As wise as an hare !

Come who so will
 To Eleanor on the hill,
 With, Fill the cup, fill,
 And sit there by still,
 Early and late !
 Thither cometh Kate,
 Cicely, and Sare,
 With their legs bare, 120
 And also their feet
 Hardly²³ full unsweet;
 With their heels dagged,²⁴
 Their kirtles all to-jagged,
 Their smocks all to-ragged,

¹ pug. Skelton himself may have had such a nose.
² See *Works*, vol. i, p. xlviii, n. 2. ³ gummy, bleared.
⁴ That is, projecting. ⁵ hips. ⁶ That is, flat-footed.
⁷ strut. ⁸ smart young thing. ⁹ sleeved cloak.
¹⁰ mantle. ¹¹ Like a flirt. ¹² cape. ¹³ dresses.
¹⁴ Weighing about three hundred pounds. ¹⁵ Twisted.

¹⁵ gipsy. ¹⁶ dirties. ¹⁷ dwelling. ¹⁸ Surrey.
¹⁹ stout wench. ²⁰ nappy. ²¹ public sale.
²² workers. ²³ Certainly. ²⁴ dirtied.

With titters and tatters,
 Bringe dishes and platters,
 With all their myght running
 To Eleanor Rumming,
 To have of her tuning:
 She leneth¹ them on the same,
 And thus beginneth the game.

130

Tertius passus

Instead of coin and money,
 Some bring her a cony,
 And some a pot with honey,
 Some a salt, and some a spoon,
 Some their hose, some their shoon;
 Some ran a good trot
 With a skillet or a pot;
 Some fill their pot full
 Of good Lemster² wool:
 An huswife of trust,
 When she is athrust,³
 Such a web can spin,
 Her thrift is full thin.

250

Some go straight thider,
 Be it slaty or slider;⁴
 They hold the high way,
 They care not what men say,
 Be that as be may;
 Some, loath to be espied,
 Start in at the back side,
 Over the hedge and pale,
 And all for the good ale.

260

Some run till they sweat,
 Bring with them malt or wheat,
 And dame Eleanor entreat
 To birl⁵ them of the best.

Than cometh another guest;
 She sweareth by the rood of rest,
 Her lips are so dry,
 Without drink she must die;
 Therefore fill it by and by,⁶
 And have here a peck of rye.

270

Anon cometh another,
 As dry as the other,
 And with her doth bring
 Meal, salt, or other thing,
 Her harvest girdle, her wedding ring,
 To pay for her scot
 As cometh to her lot.
 Some⁷ bringeth her husband's hood,
 Because the ale is good;
 Another brought her his cap

281

To offer to the ale tap,
 With flax and with tow;
 And some brought sour dough;⁸
 With hey and with how,
 Sit we down a row,
 And drink till we blow,
 And pipe tyrly tyrlow!

290

Some laid to pledge
 Their hatchet and their wedge,
 Their heckle⁹ and their reel,
 Their rock,¹⁰ their spinning wheel;
 And some went so narrow,
 They laid to pledge their wharrow,¹¹
 Their ribskin¹² and their spindle,
 Their needle and their thimble:
 Here was scant thrift
 Whan they made such shift.

300

Their thrust¹³ was so great,
 They asked never for meat,
 But drink, still drink,
 And let the cat wink,
 Let us wash our gums
 From the dry crumbs.

Quintus passus

But of all this throng
 One came them among,
 She seemed half a leech,
 And began to preach
 Of the Tuesday in the week
 Whan the mare doth kick;
 Of the virtue of an unset leek;
 Of her husband's breck;¹⁴
 With the feathers of a quail
 She could to Bordeaux sail;
 And with good ale barm¹⁵
 She could make a charm
 To help withal a stitch.
 She seemed to be a witch.

450

Another brought two goslings,
 That were naughty froslings;¹⁶
 She brought them in a wallet,
 She was a comely callet;¹⁷
 The goslings were untied;
 Eleanor began to chide,
 They be wretchcocks¹⁸ thou hast
 brought,
 They are sheer shaking nought!¹⁹

460

¹ lendeth. ² Leominster. ³ athirst.
⁴ niry or alippery. ⁵ pour out. ⁶ immediately.
⁷ Literally, a certain one; Anglo-Saxon *sum*.

⁸ for leaven. ⁹ comb for dressing flax. ¹⁰ distaff.
¹¹ whirl. ¹² leather apron. ¹³ thirst. ¹⁴ breech.
¹⁵ yeast. ¹⁶ worthless shrivelled or frostbitten things.
¹⁷ slut. ¹⁸ stunted creatures. ¹⁹ absolutely worth-
 less.

Septimus passus

But some then sat right sad
 That nothing had
 There of their awn,¹
 Neither gelt² nor pawn;
 Such were there many
 That had not a penny,
 But, whan they should walk,
 Were fain with a chalk
 To score on the balk,
 Or score on the tail:³
 God give it ill hail!
 For my fingers itch;
 I have written too mytch
 Of this mad mumming.
 Of Eleanor Rummung,
 Thus endeth the gest
 Of this worthy fest.

610

620

*Quod⁴ Skelton, Laureate.*COLIN CLOUT⁵

WHAT can it avail
 To drive forth a snail,
 Or to make a sail
 Of an herring's tail?
 To rime or to rail,
 To write or to indite,
 Either for delight
 Or else for despite?
 Or books to compile
 Of divers manner style,
 Vice to revile
 And sin to exile?
 To teach or to preach,
 As reason will reach?
 Say this, and say that,
 His head is so fat,
 He wotteth never what
 Nor wherof he speaketh;
 He crieth and he creaketh,
 He pryeth and he peeketh,
 He chides and he chatters,
 He prates and he patters,
 He clitters and he clatters,
 He meddles and he smatters,
 He gloses and he flatters;
 Or if he speak plain,
 Than he lacketh brain,

10

20

He is but a fool;
 Let him go to school,
 On a three-footed stool
 That he may down sit,
 For he lacketh wit;
 And if that he hit
 The nail on the head,
 It standeth in no stead;
 The devil, they say, is dead,
 The devil is dead.

30

It may well so be,
 Or else they would see
 Otherwise, and flee
 From worldly vanity,
 And foul covetousness,
 And other wretchedness,
 Fickle falseness,
 Variableness,
 With unstableness.

40

And if ye stand in doubt
 Who brought this rime about,
 My name is Colin Clout.

I purpose to shake out
 All my cunning bag,⁶
 Like a clerkly hag;
 For though my rime be ragged,
 Tattered and jagged,
 Rudely rain-beaten,
 Rusty and moth-eaten,
 If ye take well therewith,
 It hath in it some pith.

50

For, as far as I can see,
 It is wrong with each degree:

60

For the temporality
 Accuseth the spirituality;
 The spiritual again
 Doth grudge and complain
 Upon the temporal men:
 Thus each of other blother⁷
 The t'one again the t'other:
 Alas, they make me shudder!
 For in hoder moder⁸
 The Church is put in faut;⁹
 The prelates ben so haut,¹⁰
 They say, and look so high,
 As though they would fly
 Above the starry sky.

70

Laymen say indeed
 How they take no heed
 Their silly¹¹ sheep to feed,
 But pluck away and pull
 The fleeces of their wool,
 Unethes¹² they leave a lock

80

¹ own. ² cash. ³ tally. ⁴ Quoth.

⁵ In this worthiest of Skelton's satires Colin Clout is the vagabond spokesman of the oppressed folk against the upstart, worldly bishops and prelates; the dissolute, irresponsible, cheating nuns, monks, and friars; and even against the indifferent, slack people and nobles themselves.

⁶ bag of learning. ⁷ gabble. ⁸ hugger-mugger.
⁹ fault. ¹⁰ haughty. ¹¹ innocent. ¹² scarcely.

Of wool amonges their flock;
 And as for their cunning,
 A glomming¹ and a mumming,
 And make therof a jape;²
 They gaspe and they gape
 All to have promotion,
 There is their whole devotion,
 With money, if it will hap,
 To catch the forked cap:³
 Forsooth they are too lewd
 To say so, all beshrew'd!

90

What trow ye they say more
 Of the bishop's lore?

How in matters they be raw;
 They lumber forth the law,
 To hearken Jack and Gill,
 Whan they put up a bill,
 And judge it as they will,
 For other men's skill,
 Expounding out their clauses,
 And leave their own causes:

100

In their provincial cure,
 They make but little sure,
 And meddle⁴ very light
 In the Churches right,
 But ire and venire,⁵
 And solfa so alamine,⁶
 That the praemunire⁷
 Is like to be set afire

110

In their jurisdictions
 Through temporal afflictions:⁸
 Men say they have prescriptions
 Against spiritual contradictions,
 Accompting them as fictions.

And whiles the heads do this,
 The remnant is amiss
 Of the clergy all,
 Both great and small.
 I wot never how they wark,
 But thus the people bark;
 And surely thus they say,
 Bishops, if they may,
 Small houses would keep,
 But slumber forth and sleep,
 And assay to creep
 Within the noble walls
 Of the king's halls,

120

¹ looking glum.

² joke.

mitre.

⁴ meddels in the text.

⁵ Venire is a writ causing a jury to be summoned.

⁶ the lowest note in a musical scale.

⁷ The designation of a writ instituting proceedings against those who preferred papal jurisdiction to the king's.

⁸ The gist of these twenty lines appears to be: The bishops neglect their dioceses for private lawsuits, which circumstance is likely to make still more acute the quarrel over jurisdiction between Henry VIII and the Pope.

To fat their bodies full,
 Their souls lean and dull,
 And have full little care
 How evil their sheep fare.

130

The temporality say plain,
 How bishops disdain
 Sermons for to make,
 Of such labour to take;
 And for to say truth,
 A great part is for slouth,⁹
 But the greatest part
 Is for they have but small art
 And right slender cunning
 Within their heads winning.¹⁰
 But this reason they take
 How they are able to make
 With their gold and treasure
 Clerks out of measure,
 And yet that is a pleasure.
 How be it some there be,
 Almost two or three,
 Of that dignity,
 Full worshipful clerks,
 As appeareth by their werks,
 Like Aaron and Ure,¹¹
 The wolf from the door
 To werrin¹² and to keep
 From their ghostly sheep,
 And their spiritual lambs
 Sequestered from rams
 And from the bearded goats
 With their hairy coats;
 Set nought by gold ne groats,
 Their names if I durst tell.

140

150

160

But they are loath to mell,¹³
 And loath to hang the bell
 About the cat's neck,
 For dread to have a cheek;
 They are fain to play deuz deck,¹⁴
 They are made for the beck.¹⁵
 How be it they are good men,
 Much hearted like an hen:
 Their lessons forgotten they have
 That Becket them gave:
Thomas manum mittit ad fortia,
Spernit damna, spernit opprobria,
*Nulla Thomam frangit injuria.*¹⁶
 But now every spiritual father,
 Men say, they had rather

170

⁹ sloth.

¹⁰ dwelling.

¹¹ "Hur" in *Exodus* xvii, 10, and not Uriah in 2 *Sam.* xi — as Dyce has it.

¹² guard.

¹³ meddle.

¹⁴ a game of cards or dice.

¹⁵ to be at beck and call.

¹⁶ Thomas undertakes great things, thoughtless of contumely and injury. No hostility restrains him.

Spend much of their share
 Than to be cumb'ed with care:
 Spend! nay, nay, but spare;
 For let see who that dare
 Shoe the mockish mare;
 They make her wince and kick,
 But it is not worth a leek:
 Boldness is to seek
 The Church for to defend.
 Take me as I intepd,
 For loath I am to offend
 In this that I have penned:
 I tell you as men say;
 Amend when ye may,
 For, *usque ad montem Sare*,
 Men say ye can not appare;¹
 For some say ye hunt in parks,
 And hawk on hobby larks,²
 And other wanton warks,
 When the night darks.
 What hath lay men to do
 The gray goose for to shoe?
 Like hounds of hell,
 They cry and they yell,
 How that ye sell
 The grace of the Holy Ghost:
 Thus they make their boast
 Throughout every coast,
 How some of you do eat
 In Lenten season flesh meat,
 Pheasants, partridge, and cranes;
 Men call you therefor profanes;
 Ye pick no shrimps nor pranes,³
 Saltfish, stockfish, nor herring,
 It is not for your wearing;
 Nor in holy Lenten season
 Ye will neither beans ne peasen,⁴
 But ye look to be let loose
 To a pig or to a goose,
 Your gorge not endewed⁵
 Without a capon stewed.

Thus I, Colin Clout,
 As I go about,
 And wandering as I walk,
 I hear the people talk.
 Men say, for silver and gold
 Mitres are bought and sold;

¹ Dyce notes that the rime was probably *Seir* and *appeire*. For *Seir* see *Joshua* xv, 10; *appare* is im-pair.

² The sense appears to be to sport lasciviously with women. Cf. *Magnificence*, l. 1582. A hobby is a small hawk used to chase larks and such. Perhaps we should read *hobby-larks*.

³ prawns.

⁴ peas.

⁵ Hawking term, "no digestion for you."

There shall no clergy appose⁶
 A mitre nor a crose,⁷
 But a full purse:
 A straw for God's curse!
 What are they the worse?
 For a simoniac
 Is but a hermoniac;⁸
 And no more ye make
 Of simony, men say,
 But a child's play.

Over this, the foresaid lay
 Report how the Pope may
 An holy anker⁹ call
 Out of the stony wall,
 And him a bishop make,
 If he on him dare take
 To keep so hard a rule,
 To ride upon a mule
 With gold all betrayed,
 In purple and pall belapped;
 Some hatted and some capped,
 Richly and warm bewrapped,
 God wot to their great pains,
 In rochets of fine Ranes,¹⁰
 White as morrow's milk;
 Their tabards¹¹ of fine silk,
 Their stirrups of mixt gold begared;¹²
 There may no cost be spared;
 Their moiles¹³ gold doth eat,
 Their neighbours die for meat.

What care they though Gill sweat,
 Or Jack of the Noke?¹⁴
 The poor people they yoke
 With summons and citations
 And excommunications,
 About churches and market:
 The bishop on his carpet
 At home full soft doth sit.
 This is a farly fit,¹⁵
 To hear the people jangle,¹⁶
 How warily they wrangle:
 Alas, why do ye not handle
 And them all to-mangle?¹⁷
 Full falsely on you they lie,
 And shamefully you ascry,¹⁸
 And say as untruly,
 As the butterfly
 A man might say in mock
 Were the weathercock
 Of the steeple of Paul's;
 And thus they hurt their souls

⁶ learning challenge. ⁷ crozier. ⁸ Armenian, i.e., heretic? ⁹ anchorite. ¹⁰ Rennes linen. ¹¹ sleeveless outer garments. ¹² adorned. ¹³ mules. ¹⁴ Common men and women. ¹⁵ strange case. ¹⁶ chatter. ¹⁷ thoroughly mangle. ¹⁸ attack.

In slandering you for truth:
 Alas, it is great ruth!
 Some say ye sit in thrones,
 Like princes *aquilonis*,¹
 And shrine your rotten bones
 With pearls and precious stones;
 But how the commons groans, 350
 And the people moans
 For prestes² and for loans
 Lent and never paid,
 But from day to day delayed,
 The common wealth decayed,
 Men say ye are tongue-tayd,³
 And thereof speak nothing
 But dissimuling and glosing.
 Wherefore men be supposing
 That ye give shrewd counsel 360
 Against the common well,
 By polling⁴ and pillage
 In cities and village,
 By taxing and tollage,
 Ye make monks to have the culerage
 For covering of an old cottage,
 That committed is a college
 In the charter of dotage,⁵
Tenure par servyce de sottage,
 And not *par servyce de socage*, 370
 After old seigneurs,
 And the learning of Littleton tenures;⁶
 Ye have so overthwarted,⁷
 That good laws are subverted,
 And good reason perverted.

Now will I go 830
 And tell of other mo,
Semper protestando
*De non impugnando*⁸
 The four orders of friars,
 Though some of them be liars;
 As limiters⁹ at large
 Will charge and discharge;
 As many a frere, God wot,
 Preaches for his groat,
 Flattering for a new coat 840
 And for to have his fees;

Some to gather cheese;
 Loath they are to lese¹⁰
 Either corn or malt;
 Sometime meal and salt;
 Sometime a bacon flick,¹¹
 That is three fingers thick
 Of lard and of grease,
 Their covent to increase.

I put you out of doubt, 850
 This can not be brought about
 But they their tongues file,¹²
 And make a pleasant style
 To Margery and to Maud,
 How they have no fraud;
 And sometime they provoke
 Both Gill and Jack at Noke¹³
 Their duties to withdraw,
 That they ought by the law
 Their curates to content 860
 In open time¹⁴ and in Lent:
 God wot, they take great pain
 To flatter and to feign;
 But it is an old said saw,
 That need hath no law.
 Some walk about in melottes,¹⁵
 In gray russet and hairy coats;
 Some will neither gold ne groats;
 Some pluck a partridge in remotes,¹⁶
 And by the bars of her tail 870
 Will know a raven from a rail,
 A quail, the rail, and the old raven
Sed libera nos a malo;¹⁷ Amen.
 And by *Dudum*, their Clementine,¹⁸
 Against curates they repine;
 And say properly they are *sacerdotes*,
 To shrive, assoil, and release
 Dame Margery's soul out of Hell:
 But when the frere fell in the well,
 He could not sing himself thereout 880
 But by the help of Christian Clout.¹⁹
 Another Clementine²⁰ also,
 How frere Fabian, with other mo,²¹
Exivit de Paradiso;²²
 When they again thither shal come,
De hoc petimus consilium:²³

¹ of the North, i.e., like Lucifer.

² forced grants. ³ tongue-tied. ⁴ extortion.

⁵ This obscure passage possibly says: to have the pledge (mod. *culrach* or *culreach*) for the recovery of an old cottage which was given to a religious body by some dotard, the tenure being by folly instead of by the usual socage. — Socage is holding in fee simple by the performance of some economic service, such as paying rent or doing agricultural labor.

⁶ Littleton (fl. 1450) wrote a *Treatise on Tenures*.

⁷ opposed (intransitive).

⁸ Always protesting about not bothering.

⁹ Friars who beg within a certain defined district.

¹⁰ lose. ¹¹ flitch. ¹² polish. ¹³ Cf. l. 324.

¹⁴ time that is not fast-time.

¹⁵ hair cloaks. ¹⁶ remote spots.

¹⁷ Deliver us from evil.

¹⁸ A decretal of Pope Clement V, beginning "*Dudum* etc." grants friars the power of absolution and the like. See Dyce's note.

¹⁹ Alluding to a popular song which told how a clever maid ducked a lustful friar in a well.

²⁰ Another decretal of Clement.

²¹ more. The allusion is not obvious.

²² Issued from Paradise.

²³ Of this we seek counsel.

And through all the world they go
With *Dirige* and *Placebo*.¹

But now my mind ye understand,
For they must take in hand 890
To preach, and to withstand
All manner of objections;
For bishops have protections,
They say, to do corrections,
But they have no affections
To take the said directions;
In such manner of cases,
Men say, they bear no faces
To occupy such places,
To sow the seed of graces: 900
Their hearts are so fainted,²
And they be so attained
With covetise³ and ambition,
And other superstition,
That they be deaf and dumb,
And play silence and glum,
Can say nothing but mum.

They occupy them so
With singing *Placebo*,⁴
They will no farther go: 910
They had lever to please,
And take their worldly ease,
Than to take on hand
Worshipfully to withstand.
Such temporal war and bate,⁵
As now is made of late
Against holy Church estate,
Or to maintain good quarrels.
The lay men call them barrels
Full of gluttony 920
And of hypocrisy,
That counterfeits and paints
As they were very saints:
In matters that them like
They shew them politic,
Pretending gravity
And seigniority,
With all solemnity,
For their indemnity;
For they will have no loss 930
Of a penny nor of a cross
Of their predial⁶ lands,
That cometh to their hands,
And as far as they dare set,
All is fish that cometh to net:
Building royally
Their mansions curiously,
With turrets and with towers,

With halls and with bowers,
Stretching to the stars, 940
With glass windows and bars;
Hanging about the walls
Cloths of gold and palls,
Arras of rich array,
Fresh as flowers in May;
With dame Diana naked;
How lusty Venus quaked,
And how Cupid shaked
His dart, and bent his bow
For to shoot a crow 950
At her tirlly tirlow;⁷
And how Paris of Troy
Daunced a lege de moy,⁸
Made lusty sport and joy
With dame Helen the queen;
With such stories bidene⁹
Their chambers well beseen;
With triumphs of Cæsar,
And of Pompeius' war,
Of renown and of fame 960
By them to get a name:
Now all the world stares,
How they ride in goodly chares,¹⁰
Conveyed by oliphants,¹¹
With laureat garlands,
And by unicorns
With their seemly horns;
Upon these beasts riding,
Naked boys striding,
With wanton wenches winking. 970
Now truly, to my thinking,
That is a speculation
And a meet meditation
For prelates of estate,
Their courage to abate
From worldly wantonness,
Their chambers thus to dress
With such parfetness¹²
And all such holiness;
Howbeit they let down fall 980
Their churches cathedral.

Of no good bishop speak I,
Nor good priest I esery,¹³
Good frere, nor good chanon,
Good nun, nor good canon 1100
Good monk, nor good clerk,
Nor yet of no good work:
But my recounting is
Of them that do amiss

⁷ Cf. Eleanor Rumming, l. 292. Here a wanton allusion.

⁸ A sort of dance, evidently.

⁹ withal.

¹⁰ chariots.

¹¹ elephants.

¹² perfection.

¹³ attack.

¹ With singing masses for the dead, of which parts begin thus.

² feigned.

³ covetousness.

⁴ With playing the sycophant.

⁵ debate, fighting.

⁶ farm.

In speaking and rebelling,
 In hindering and disavailing¹
 Holy Church, our mother,
 One against another;
 To use such despiting
 Is all my whole writing;
 To hinder no man,
 As near as I can,
 For no man have I named:
 Wherefore should I be blamed?
 Ye ought to be ashamed,
 Against me to be gramed,²
 And can tell no cause why,
 But that I write truly.

1110

Then if any there be
 Of high or low degree
 Of the spirituality,
 Or of the temporalty
 That doth think or ween
 That his conscience be not clean,
 And feeleth himself sick,
 Or touched on the quick,
 Such grace God them send
 Themselves to amend,
 For I will not pretend
 Any man to offend.

1120

1130

Wherefore, as thinketh me,
 Great idiots they be,
 And little grace they have,
 This treatise to deprave;³
 Nor will hear no preaching,
 Nor no virtuous teaching,
 Nor will have no reciting
 Of any virtuous writing;
 Will know none intelligence
 To reform their negligence,
 But live still out of fashion,
 To their own damnation.
 To do shame they have no shame,
 But they would no man should them
 blame:

1140

They have an evil name,
 But yet they will occupy the same.

With them the word of God
 Is counted for no rod;⁴
 They count it for a railing,
 That nothing is availing;
 The preachers with evil hailing:
 'Shall they daunt us prelates,
 That be their primates?
 Not so hardy on their pates!
 Hark, how the losell⁵ prates,
 With a wide wesaunt!⁶

1150

Avaunt, Sir Guy of Gaunt.⁷
 Avaunt, lewd priest, avaunt!
 Avaunt, sir doctor Deyyas!⁸
 Prate of thy matins and thy mass, 1160
 And let our matters pass:
 How darest thou, dawcock, mell?⁹
 How darest thou, losell,
 Allegate¹⁰ the gospel
 Against us of the counsel?
 Avaunt to the Devil of Hell!
 Take him, warden of the Fleet,
 Set him fast by the feet!
 I say, Lieutenant of the Tower,
 Make this lurdayne for to lour; 1170
 Lodge him in Little Ease,¹¹
 Feed him with beans and pease!
 The King's Bench¹² or Marshalsy,¹³
 Have him thider by and by!¹³
 The villain preacheth openly,
 And declareth our villany;
 And of our free simpleness
 He says that we are reckless,
 And full of wilfulness, 1180
 Shameless and merciless,
 Incorrigible and insatiate;
 And after this rate
 Against us doth prate.

1180

'At Paul's Cross or elsewhere,
 Openly at Westminster,
 And Saint Mary Spital,¹⁴
 They set not by us a whistle:
 At the Austin friars¹⁵
 They count us for liars:
 And at Saint Thomas of Akers¹⁶ 1190
 They carp¹⁷ us like crackers,¹⁸
 How we will rule at all will
 Without good reason or skill;
 And say how that we be
 Full of partiality;
 And how at a prong¹⁹
 We turn right into wrong,
 Delay causes so long
 That right no man can fong;²⁰
 They say many matters be borne 1200
 By the right of a ram's horn,²¹
 Is not this a shameful scorn,
 To be teared thus and torn

⁷ Possibly this is a certain Guy whose spirit haunted a town near Ghent. See Dyce's note, iii, p. 133. ⁸ Possibly for *deuce-ace*, two-one, a poor throw, a worthless fellow. Perhaps *devious*. ⁹ meddle. ¹⁰ Allege.

¹¹ A name for an uncomfortable cell as well as for the stocks. ¹² All London prisons. ¹³ immediately.

¹⁴ This hospital was in Bishopsgate Ward.

¹⁵ In Broad-Street Ward.

¹⁶ Acre. This was a hospital in Cheapside.

¹⁷ scold. ¹⁸ noisy talkers. ¹⁹ pinch. ²⁰ obtain.

²¹ Borne, i.e., carried out, crookedly.

¹ injuring.

² angered.

³ defame.

⁴ rule?

⁵ rascal.

⁶ weasand, throat.

'How may we this endure?
 Wherefore we make you sure,
 Ye preachers shall be yaw'd;¹
 And some shall be saw'd,
 As noble Isaiahs,
 The holy prophet, was;
 And some of you shall die,
 Like holy Jeremy;
 Some hanged, some slain,
 Some beaten to the brain;
 And we will rule and reign,
 And our matters maintain
 Who dare say there again,
 Or who dare disdain
 At our pleasure and will:
 For, be it good or be it ill,
 As it is, it shall be still,
 For all master doctor of Civil,
 Or of Divine, or doctor Drivel,
 Let him cough, rough,² or snivel;
 Run God, run devil,
 Run who may run best,
 And let take all the rest!
 We set not a nutshell
 The way to Heaven or to Hell.'

1210

Lo, this is the guise nowadays!
 It is to dread, men says,
 Lest they be Sadducees,
 As they be said sain³
 Which determined plain
 We should not rise again
 At dreadful doomsday;
 And so it seemeth they play,
 Which hate to be corrected
 Whan they be infected,
 Nor will suffer this book
 By hook ne by crook
 Printed for to be,
 For that no man should see
 Nor read in any scrolls
 Of their drunken nolls,
 Nor of their noddly polls,⁴
 Nor of their silly souls,
 Nor of some witless pates
 Of divers great estates,
 As well as other men.

1220

1230

1240

Now to withdraw my pen,
 And now a while to rest,
 Me seemeth it for the best.

1250

The forecastle of my ship
 Shall glide, and smoothly slip
 Out of the waves wod⁵
 Of the stormy flood;

Shoot anchor, and lie at road,⁶
 And sail not far abroad,
 Till the coast be clear,
 And the lode star appear:
 My ship now will I steer
 Toward the port salu⁷
 Of our Saviour Jesu,
 Such grace that he us send,
 To rectify and amend
 Things that are amiss,
 When that his pleasure is.
 Amen!

1260

GARLAND OF LAUREL⁸

To Mistress Isabell Pennell (A. 973)

By Saint Mary, my lady,
 Your mammy and your daddy
 Brought forth a goodly baby!
 My maiden Isabell,
 Reflaring⁹ rosabell,
 The flagrant¹⁰ camomel;
 The ruddy rosary,¹¹
 The sovereign rosemary,
 The pretty strawberry;
 The columbine, the nepte,¹²
 The jelloffer¹³ well set,
 The proper¹⁴ violet;
 Ennwid¹⁵ your colour
 Is like the daisy flower
 After the April shower;
 Star of the morrow gray,
 The blossom on the spray,
 The freshest flower of May;
 Maidenly demure,
 Of womanhood the lure;
 Wherefore I make you sure,
 It were an heavenly health,
 It were an endless wealth,
 A life for God himself,
 To hear this nightingale,
 Among the birdes small,
 Warbling in the vale,
 Dug, dug,
 Jug, jug,
 Good year and good luck,
 With chuk, chuk, chuk, chuk!

10

20

30

⁶ at anchor.⁷ safe port.

⁸ The *Garland of Laurel* (c. 1600 ll.) is an elaborate self-laudation, wherein Skelton, Laureate, communes with goddesses and departed worthies about himself and his works. The numerous little lyrical addresses are the pleasantest part of it.

⁹ Odorous.¹⁰ fragrant.¹¹ rose.¹² mint; also spelt *nep*.¹³ pink, gillyflower.¹⁴ modest.¹⁵ Tinted.¹ hewn to bits.² For *roul*, i.e., snore?³ called commonly.⁴ silly pates.⁵ mad.

To Mistress Margaret Hussey (l. 1002)

Merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower;¹
 With solace and gladness,
Much mirth and no madness,
All good and no badness,
So joyously,
So maidenly,
So womanly
Her demeaning
In every thing,
Far, far passing
That I can endite,
Or suffice to write
Of merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as a falcon
Or hawk of the tower;
 As patient and as still,
And as full of good will,
As fair Isaphill;²
Coliander,³
Sweet pomander,⁴
Good cassander;⁵
Steadfast of thought,
Well made, well wrought;
Far may be sought
Erst⁶ that ye can find
So courteous, so kind
As merry Margaret,
This midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower.

LULLABY

With, Lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

¹ high-flying, towering, hawk.

² Hypsiphyle of Lemnos, who succoured Jason. See Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*.

³ Coriander.

⁴ perfume ball.

⁵ the herb cassandra ?

⁶ Before.

My darling dear, my daisy flower,
Let me, quod he, lie in your lap.
Lie still, quod she, my paramour,
Lie still hardly,⁷ and take a nap.
His head was heavy, such was his hap,
All drowsy dreaming, drowned in sleep,
That of his love he took no keep,
With, Hey, lullay, &c.

10

With ba, ba, ba, and bas, bas, bas,
She cherished⁸ him both cheek and chin,
That he wist never where he was;
He had forgotten all deadly sin.
He wanted wit her love to win:
He trusted her payment, and lost all his pay:
She left him sleeping, and stale away,
With, Hey, lullay, &c.

10

The rivers rowth,⁹ the waters wan,¹⁰
She spared not to wet her feet;
She waded over, she found a man
That halsed¹¹ her heartily and kissed her sweet:
Thus after her cold she caught a heat.
My lief,¹² she said, rowteth¹³ in his bed;
Iwis¹⁴ he hath an heavy head,
With, Hey, lullay, &c.

20

What dreamest thou, drunkard, drowsy pate!
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;
Thou blinkerd blowbowl,¹⁵ thou wakest too late,
Behold, thou liest, luggard, alone!
Well may thou sigh, well may thou groan,
To deal with her so cowardly:
Iwis, powle-hatchet,¹⁶ she blear'd thine eye.¹⁷

30

30

Quod Skelton, laureat.

⁷ boldly. ⁸ kissed him. ⁹ rough. ¹⁰ Wan is a stock adjective with water. ¹¹ embraced. ¹² dear one. ¹³ anorea. ¹⁴ Certainly. ¹⁵ stupid sot.

¹⁶ Apparently "pole-hatchet," i.e., worthless fellow. Cf. "hatchet-face." ¹⁷ deceived you.

STEPHEN HAWES

THE PASTIME OF PLEASURE

(From *Cap. xiv. A commendation of Gower, Chaucer, and especially Lydgate*)

O THOUGHTFUL herte, tombled all aboute
Upon the se of stormy ignoraunce,
For to sayle forthe thou arte in grete doute,
Over the waves of grete encombraunce;
Wythout ony comforte, saupe of esperance,
Whiche the exhorteth hardely to sayle
Unto thy purpose wyth diligent travayle.

Afrycus' Auster bloweth frowardly
Towarde the lande and habitacyon
Of thy wel faverde and moost fayre lady, 10
For whose sake and delectacyon
Thou hast take this occupacyon,
Principally ryht well to attayne
Her swete rewarde for thy besy payne.

O pensyfe herte, in the stormy pery 1
Mercury northwest thou mayst se appere,
After tempest to glad thyne emespery; 2
Hoyse 3 up thy sayle, for thou must drawe
nere

Towarde the ende of thy purpose so clere,
Remembre the of the trace and daunce 4 20
Of poetes olde wyth all the purveyaunce.

As morall Gower, whose sentencyous dewe
Adowne refflayreth 5 with fayre golden
bemes,

And after Chaucers all abrode doth shewe,
Our vyces to clense; his depared 6 streemes
Kyndlynge our hertes wyth the fry lemes 7
Of moral vertue, as is probable
In all hys bokes so swete and profytable.

The boke of fame, which is sentencyous,
He drewe hym selfe on hys own invencyon; 81
And than the tragidydes so pytous
Of the xix. ladyes, 8 was his translacyon;
And upon hys ymaginacyon
He made also the tales of Caunterbury;
Some vertuous, and some glad and mery.

1 gale. 2 hemisphere, sphere, life. 3 The earlier form of our *hoist*. 4 example and practice. 5 distills.
6 For depured, i.e., refined? 7 rays. 8 The Legend of Good Women.

And of Troylus the pytous dolour
For his lady Cresyde, ful of doublenes,
He did bewayle ful well the langoure,
Of all hys love and grete unhappyness. 40
And many other bokes doubtles
He dyd compyle, whose godly name
In printed bokes doth remayne in fame.

And, after him, my mayster Lydgate,
The monke of Bury, dyd hym wel apply
Both to contryve and eke to translate;
And of vertue ever in especyally,
For he dyd compyle than full nayally 9
Of our blessed lady the conversacion,
Saint Edmund's life martred with treson. 10

Of the fall of prynces, ryght wofully 50
He did endyte in all piteous wyse,
Folowynge his auctoure Bocas rufully; 11
A ryght greate boke he did truly compyse,
A good ensample for us to dyspyse
This worlde, so ful of mutabylite,
In whiche no man can have a certente.

And thre reasons ryght greatly profytable
Under coloure he cloked craftely;
And of the chorle he made the fable
That shutte the byrde in a cage so closely, 60
The pamphlete sheweth it expressely; 12
He fayned also the Courte of Sapyence, 13
And translated wyth all his dylygence

The grete boke of the last destruccyon
Of the cyte of Troye, whylome so famous,
How for woman was the confusyon;
And betwene vertue and the lyfe vycyous
Of goddes and goddess, a boke solacyous
He did compyle; and the tyme to passe,
Of love he made the bryght Temple of
Glasse. 70

9 Is this a corruption of some word like *royally*?

10 Lydgate composed a *Life of the Virgin* and several other pieces about and to her and St. Edmund. See the complete list of his works in MacCracken's *Minor Poems of Lydgate*.

11 Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* is from Boccaccio's (*Bocas*) *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*; and he tells us that he set about his 36,000-line task ruefully.

12 *The Churl and the Bird*. 13 *The Court of Sapience* and *The Assembly of Gods* (l. 67) may not be really Lydgate's — see MacCracken, p. xxxv.

Were not these thre gretly to commende,
Whyche them applyed such bokes to con-
tryve,

Whose famous draughtes¹ no man can
amende?

The synne of slouth they dyd from them
dryve,

After theyr death for to abyde on lyve
In worthy fame by many a nacyon,
Their bokes theyr actes do make relacyon.

O mayster Lydgate, the most dulcet sprynge
Of famous rethoryke, wyth balade ryall,
The chefe orygynall of my lernyng, ⁸⁰
What vayleth² it on you for to call
Me for to ayde, now in especial;
Sythen your body is now wrapte in chest,
I pray God to gyve your soule good rest.

O what losse is it of suche a one!
It is to grete truely for me to tell;
Sythen the tyme that his lyfe was gone,
In al this realme his pere did not dwell;
Above al other he did so excell,
None sith his time in arte wolde succede, ⁹⁰
After their death to have fame for their mede.

But many a one is ryght well experte
In this connyng, but upon auctoryte,
They fayne no fables pleasaunt and covert,
But spende theyr time in vaynful vanyte,
Makyng balades of fervent amyte.
As gestes and tryfles wythout frutefulness;
Thus al in vayne they spende their besynes.

I, lytell or nought expert in poetry,
Of my mayster Lydgate wyll folowe the
trace, ¹⁰⁰

As evermore so his name to magnify
Wyth suche lytle bokes, by Goddess grace,
If in this worlde I may have the space;
The lytell connyng that his grace me sente
In tyme amonge in suche wyse shall be
spente.

And yet nothinge upon presumpeyon
My mayster Lydgate I wyll not envy,
But all onely is mine enteneyon
With suche labour my selfe to occupy;
As whyte by blacke doth shyne more
clerely, ¹¹⁰
So shal theyr matters appeare more pleas-
aunt

Beside my draughtes rude and ignoraunt.

¹ delineations.

² availeth.

(From *Cap. xvi*, of music)

She commaunded her mynstrelles right
anone to play
Mamours³ the swete and the gentill daunce;
With La Bell Pucell, that was fayre and
gaye,
She me recommaunded, with all pleasuraunce,
To daunce true measures without varyaunce.
O Lorde God! how glad than was I,
So for to daunce with my swete lady.

By her propre hande, soft as any sylke,
With due obeysaunce I dyd her then take;
Her skynne was white as whales bone⁴ or
mylke. ¹⁰
My thought was ravysshed, I might not
aslake⁶

My brennyng hert, she the fyre dyd make;
These daunces truely musyke hath me tought
To lute or daunce, but it avayleth nought:

For the fyre kyndled and waxed more and
more,
The dauncyng blewe it; wyth her beaute
clere

My hert sekened and began to waxe sore;
A mynute vi. houres, and vi. houres a yere,
I thought it was, so hevy was my chere;
But yet for cover my great love aryght, ²⁰
The outwarde countenaunce I made glad
and light.

And for fere myne eyes should my hert be-
wray,

I toke my leve and to a temple wente,
And all alone I to my selfe dyd saye:
Alas! what fortune hath me hyther sente,
To devoyde⁵ my joye and my hert torment;
No man can tell howe great payne it is,
But yf he wyll fele it, as I do ywys.

(From *Cap. xviii*. Of the dolorous and lowly
disputacion betwene La Bel Pucell and Graund-
amourc.)

Than forth so went Good Counsell and I,
At vi. a clocke, unto a garden fayre;
By Musykes toure walked most goodly,
Where La Bell Pucell used to repayre
In the swete mornyng for to take the ayre
Among the floures of aromatyke fume,
The mysty ayre to exyle and consume.

³ The name of a tune?

⁴ ivory—originally from the tusks of the walrus.

⁵ quench.

⁶ lose.

And at the gate we met the portresse,
That was right gentill, and called Curteysy,

Whych salued¹ us wyth wordes of mekenesse,¹⁰

And axed us the veraye cause and why
Of our comynge to the gardeine sothely?
Truly, saide we, for nothyng but well,
A lytel to speke with La Bell Pucell.

Truly, quod she, in the garden grene
Of many a swete and sundry floure
She maketh a garlonde that is veray shene;²
Wyth true-loves³ wrought in many a coloure,

Replete with swetenes and dulcet odoure;
And all alone, wythout company,²⁰
Amyddes an herber⁴ she sitteth plesauntly.

Nowe stande you styl for a lytle space,
I wyll let her of you have knowledgyng.
And ryght anone she went to her grace,
Tellyng her than how we were comynge,
To speke wyth her gretly desyryng.
Truly, she sayd, I am right well content
Of theyr comyng to know the hole entent.

Then good Curteysy, wythout taryenge,
Came unto us wyth all her diligence,³⁰
Prayeng us to take our entryng
And come unto the ladies precece,
To tell our erande to her excellence.
Than in we wente to the garden glorious,
Lyke to a place of pleasure most solacious.

Wyth Flora paynted and wrought curiously,

In divers knottes of marvaylous gretenes;
Rampande Lyons stode up wondrously,
Made all of herbes with dulcet swetenes,³⁹
Wyth many dragons of marvaylos likenes,
Of dyvers floures made ful craftely,
By Flora couloured wyth colours sundry.

Amiddes the garden so moche delectable
There was an herber fayre and quadrante,⁵
To paradyse right well comparable,
Set all about with flours fragraunt;
And in the myddle there was resplendyshaunte

A dulcet spring and a marvaylous fountaine,

Of golde and asure made all certaine.

¹ saluted. ² splendid. ³ the plant so called
⁴ arbor or garden. ⁵ square.

In wonderfull and curious similitude⁵⁰
There stode a dragon, of fyne golde so pure,
Upon his tayle of myghty fortitude,
Wretched and skaled al wyth asure;
Havyng thre hedes divers in figure,
Whych in a bathe of the sylver grette
Spouted the water that was so dulcette.

Besyde whiche fountayne, the moost fayre lady

La Bel Pucel was galy syttyng;
Of many floures fayre and ryally
A goodly chaplet she was in makynge.⁶⁰
Her heer was downe so clerely shynyng,
Lyke to the golde late purifyed with fyre,
Her heer was bryght as the drawne wyre.

Lyke to a lady for to be moost trewe,
She ware a fayre and goodly garment,
Of most fyne velvet, al of Indy blewe,
Wyth armynes powdred bordred at the vent.⁶
On her fayre handes, as was convenient,
A payre of gloves ryght selender and softe.
In approchyng nere I did beholde her oft.⁷⁰

And whan that I came before her presence,
Unto the ground I dyd knele adowne;
Sayeng: O lady! moost fayre of excellence,
O stere so clere of vertuous renowne!
Whose beaute fayre in every realme and towne,
Indued wyth grace and also wyth goodnes,
Dame Fame the her selfe doth evermore expresse.

Amoure

Please it your grace for to gyve audyence
Unto my wofull and pitous complaynte;
How fervent love, wythout resystance,⁸⁰
My careful herte hath made low and faynte,
And you therof are the hole constraynt;
Your beauty truly hath me fettered faste,
Wythout your helpe my lfe is nere-hand paste.⁷

Pucell

Stande up, quod she; I marvayle of this
 case,
What sodayne love hath you so arayde
Wyth so great payne your heart to embrace?

⁶ Bordered at the openings with a line of the heraldic ermine tails; or perhaps better — dotted with heraldic ermine tails (sometimes white, but more properly black), and embroidered at the openings.

⁷ nearly passed.

And why for me ye should be so dismayde ?
 As of your lyfe ye nede not to be afraide.
 For ye of me now have no greater awe, 90
 But whan ye lyst ye may your love wyth-
 draw.

Amoure

Than stode I up, and right so did she,
 Alas ! I sayd than, my heart is so set,
 That it is yours, it may none other be;
 Your selfe hath caught it in so sure a net,
 That if that I may not your favour get,
 No doubt it is, the great payne of love
 May not aswage tyl death it remove.

Pucell

Truely, quod she, I am obedient
 Unto my frendes whych do me so guyde;
 They shal me rule as is convenient, 101
 In the snare of love I wyl nothyng slyde,
 My chaunce or fortune I wyll yet abide.
 I thanke you for your love right humbly,
 But I your cause can nothing remedy.

Amoure

I knowe, madame, that your frendes all
 Unto me sure wyll be contraryous;
 But what for that? your selfe in speciall
 Remembre there is no love so joyous
 As is your owne to you most precyous; 110
 Wyll you gyve your youthe and your flour-
 ynge aage
 To them agaynst your mynde in maryage ?

Pucell

Agaynst my mynde, of that I were lothe,
 To wed for fere, as them to obey;
 Yet had I lever they were somewhat wrothe,
 For I my selfe do bere the locke and
 kaye
 Yet of my mynde, and wyll do many a
 daye.
 Myne owne I am, what that I lyste to do
 I stand untied, there is no joye therto.

Amoure

O swete lady ! the good perfyte sterre 120
 Of my true herte, take ye now pyte;
 Thynke on my payne whiche am tofore you
 here,
 Wyth your swete eyes beholde you and se,
 How thought and wo, by great extremyte,
 Hath chaunged my hue into pale and wanne:
 It was not so whan I to love began.

Pucell

So, me thynke, it doth right well appere
 By your coloure that love hath done you
 wo;
 Your hevye countenance and your dolefull
 chere; 129
 Hath love suche myght for to aray you so
 In so short a space ? I marvayle moche
 also
 That ye wolde love me so sure in certayne,
 Before ye knewe that I wolde love agayne ?

Amoure

My good dere herte ! it is no mervayle why;
 Your beaute cleare and lovely lokes swete
 My herte dyde perce with love so sodaynly
 At the fyrste tyme that I dyde you mete;
 In the olde temple whan I dyde you grete,
 Your beaute my herte so surely assayde, 139
 That syth that tyme it hath to you obayde.

(From Cap. xix. How La Bell Pucell
 Graunted Graund Amoure Love, and of her
 Dispiteous Departage.¹)

Your wo and payne, and all your languish-
 ynge,
 Continually ye shall not spende in vayne,
 Sythen I am cause of your great mornynge,
 Nothyng exyle you shall I by dysdayne;
 Youre hert and myne shall never parte in
 twayne:
 Though at the fyrste I wolde not conde-
 scende,
 It was for fere ye dyde some yll entende.

Amoure

With thought of yll my minde was never
 myxte,
 To you, madame, but alway clene and pure,
 Bothe daye and nyght upon you hole per-
 fyxte.² 10
 But I my mynde yet durst nothyng dis-
 cure.³
 How for your sake I dyd suche wo endure,
 Tyll now this houre with dredfull hert so
 faynt
 To you, swete herte, I have made my com-
 playnt.

Pucell

I demed ofte you loved me before,
 By your demenour I dyde it aspye,
 And in my mynde I juged evermore

¹ merciless departure. ² quite fixed. ³ disclose.

That at the laste ye wolde full secretly
Tell me your mynde of love right gen-
tily;

As ye have done, so my mercy to crave, so
In all worshyppe you shal my true love
have.

Amoure

O Lorde God! than how joyfull was I!
She loked on me wyth lovely contenance;
I kyst her ones or twice right swetely;
Her depured¹ vysage, replete with pleas-
aunce,

Rejoyced my heart with amorous purve-
aunce.

O lady clere! that perste² me at the
rote,

O floure of comforte, all my hele and
bote!

O gemme of vertue, and lady excellent!
Above all other in beauteous goodlynesse!
O eyen bright as sterre refulgent,
O profounde cause of all my sekenesse,
Now all my joye and all my gladnes,
Wolde God that we were joyned in one,
In maryage, before this day were gone.

Pucell

A, a! sayd she, ye must take a payne a
whyte;

I must depart, by the compuleyon
Of my frendes, I wyl not you begyle,
Though they me led to a ferre³ nacion,
My heart shall be without variacion
Wyth you present, in perfite sykernes,
As true and stable without doublenes.

To me to come is harde and daungerous,
When I am there; for gyauntes ugly,
Wyth two monstres also, blacke and tedy-
ous,

That by the waye awayte full cruelly
For to distroye you yll and utterly,
Whan you that way do take the passage,
To attayne my love by hye advauntage.

(From Cap. xxvii. King Melezius defines
Knighthood.)

Knighthode, he sayd, was first established
The comenwelth in right to defende,
That by the wrong it be not minished;
So every knight did truely condiscende,
For the comynwelth his power to entende

¹ pure, clear.

² pierced.

³ far:

Ageynst all suche rebelles contrarious,
Them to subdue with power victorious.

For knighthode is not in the feates of
warre,

As for to fight in quarell right or wronge,
But in a cause which trouth can not de-
farre;⁴

He ought himselfe for to make sure and
stronge

Justice to kepe mixt with mercy amonge;
And no quarell a knight ought to take,
But for a trouth or for the comins⁵ sake.

For fyrst, good hope his legge harneys
sholde be;

His habergion of perfyte ryghtwysenes;
Gyrde faste wyth the gyrdle of chastite,
His riche placarde⁶ should be good besin-
nes,

Brandred⁷ with almes so full of larges;
The helmet mekenes, and the shelde good
fayth;

His swerde Goddes worde, as saynt Poule
sayth.

Also true wyddowes he ought to restore
Unto their right for to attayne theyr dower,
And to upholde and mainteyne evermore
The welth of maydens with his myghty
power.

And to his soverayne, at every maner hower,
To be redy, true, and eke obeysaunt,
In stable love fixt and not variaunt.

(From Cap. xxix. Howe he departed from
Kynge Melyzius, with his Grayhoundes and At-
tendaunce, his Varlet, and met with false reporte,
that chaunged his name to Godfrey Gobilyve.⁸)

And so forth we rode, tyll we sawe afferre
To us came rydyng, on a lytell nagge,
A folysshe dwarfe, nothyng for the warre,
With a hood, a bell, a foxtayle, and a
bagge;

In a pyed cote he rode brygge a bragge;⁹
And whan that he unto us drewe nye,
I behelde his body and his visnamy.¹⁰

⁴ defer.

⁵ commons'.

⁶ breastplate.

⁷ Probably we should read *braudred* = embroidered, embossed, adorned. See *branderer* in the *New English Dictionary*.

⁸ Godfrey Hurry-Up or Quickstep. This vulgar, realistic genre-picture, reminding one of Langland and Skelton and the Moralities, occurs oddly in the gentle beauty of *The Pastime*. Notice the change of metre, on page 254, — from stanzas to couplets.

⁹ swaggeringly?

¹⁰ physiognomy, face.

His head was greate, beteled was his browes,
 Hys eyes holow, and his nose crokod;
 His bryes¹ brystled truely lyke a sowes;¹⁰
 His chekes here,² and God wote he lokod
 Full lyke an ape; here and there he toted³
 With a pyed berde and hangyng lyppes
 grete,
 And every tothe as blacke as ony gete.⁴

His necke shorte, his sholders stode awry,
 His breste fatte, and bolne⁵ in the wast:
 His armes great, with fyngers crokedly;
 His legges kewed;⁶ he rode to me fast,
 Full lyke a patron⁷ to be shaped in bast.
 'Good even,' he sayd, 'and have good day,²⁰
 If that it lyke you for to ryde merely.'

'Welcome,' I sayde; 'I praye the now
 tell
 Me what thou arte and where thou dost
 dwell.'
 'Sothelyche,' quod he, 'whan Icham⁸ in
 Kent

At home Icham; though I be hether
 sente,
 Icham a gentlyman of much noble kynne,
 Though Iche be clad in a knaves skynne.
 For there was one called Peter Pratefast,
 That in all hys lyfe spake no worde in
 waste;

He wedde a wyfe that was called Maude.⁹ ³⁰
 'I trowe,' quod I, 'she was a gorgious
 baude.'

'Thou lyst,' quod he, 'she was gentyl and
 good,

She gave her husbunde many a furde hode,⁹
 And at his melys, without any mys,
 She wolde him serve in clenly wyse ywys.
 God love her soule as she loved clenness,
 And kepe her dysshes from al foulness.
 Whan she lacketh cloutes, without any
 fayle

She wyped her disshes wyth her dogges
 tayle.

And they had yssue Sym Sadle-gander, ⁴⁰
 That for a wyfe in all the worlde did wan-
 der,

Tyll at the last, in the wynters nyght,
 By Temmes he sayled, aryved by ryght,
 Amonge the nunnes of the grene cote.¹⁰
 He wente to laud out of his prety bote,

¹ eyebrows. ² hairy. ³ peered. ⁴ jet.

⁵ swollen, i.e., he was pot-bellied.

⁶ meaning uncertain, perhaps *askew*, bowed.

⁷ pattern.

⁸ I am. This is Kentish dialect.

⁹ furred hood, i.e., hoodwinked him. ¹⁰ courtesans.

And wedde there one that was comen
 anewe:¹¹

He thought her stable, and faythfull, and
 trewe.

Her name was Betres, that so clenly was,
 That no fylthe by her in any wyse shoulde
 passe.

And betwene them bothe they did get a
 sonne,⁵⁰

Whiche was my father, that in Kente did
 wonne.¹²

His name was Davy Dronken-nole;
 He never dranke but in a fayre blacke
 boule.

He toke a wyfe that was very fayre,
 And gate me on her for to be his ayre.

Her name was Alyson, she loved nought
 elles

But ever more to ryng her blacke belles.¹³
 Now are they deade all, so mote I well
 thryve,

Excepte my selfe Godfray Gobelive,
 Whiche rode aboute, a wyfe me to seke, ⁶⁰
 But I can finde none that is good and
 meke;

For all are shrewes in the world aboute,
 I coude never mete with none other route;
 For some develles wyll their husbundes
 bete,

And tho that can not, they wyll never
 let

Their tongues cease, but gyve thre wordes
 for one,

Fy on them all! I wyll of them have
 none:

Who loveth any for to make hym sadde,
 I wene that he become worse than madde.
 They are not stedfast nothyng in their
 mynde, ⁷⁰

But alway tornyng lyke a blaste of wynde.
 For let a man love them never so wele,
 They will hym love agayne never a dele.

For though a man all his lyfe certayne
 Unto her sue to have release of payne,
 And at the last she on hym do rewte,
 If by fortune there come another newe,
 The first shall be clene out of her favoure.
 Recorde of Creseyd and of Troylus the
 doloure.

They are so subtyll and so false of kynde, ⁸⁰
 There can no man wade beyonde their
 mynde.

¹¹ common enough. ¹² dwell. ¹³ Meaning doubtful.

(*From Cap. xlii. Graund Amours Epitaph*)

O mortall folke ! you may beholde and se
Howe I lye here, sometime a myghty
knyght;
The end of joye and all prosperite
Is death at last, through his course and
myght;
After the day therē cometh the derke
night;
For though the day be never so longe,
At last the belles ringeth to evensonge.

And my selfe called La Graunde Amoure,
Seking adventure in the worldly glory,
For to attayne the riches and honour, 10
Did thinke full lytle that I should here
lye,
Tyll deth dyde marke me full ryght pry-
vely.
Lo what I am ! and whereto you must !
Lyke as I am so shall you be all dust.

Than in your mynde inwardly despyse
The bryttle worlde, so full of doublenes,
With the vyle flesshe, and ryght sone aryse
Out of your slepe of mortall hevynes;
Subdue the devill with grace and meke-
nes,
That after your lyfe frayle and transitory, 20
You may then live in joye perdurably.

THE EXCUSATION OF THE AUCTOUR

Unto all Poetes I do me excuse,
If that I offende for lacke of science;
This lyttle boke yet do ye not refuse,
Though it be devoyde of famous eloquence;
Adde or detra¹ by your hye sapience;
And pardon me of my hye enterpryse,
Whiche of late this fable dyd fayne and
devise.

Go, little boke ! I praye God the save
From misse-metryng by wrong impression;
And who that ever list the for to have, 10
That he perceyve well thyne intencion,
For to be grounded without presumption,
As for to eschue the synne of ydlenes;
To make suche bokes I apply my busines.

Besechyng God for to geve me grace
Bokes to compyle of moral vertue;
Of my maister Lidgate to folowe the trace,
His noble fame for laude and renue,²
Whiche in his lyfe the slouth did eschue;
Makyng great bokes to be in memory, 20
On whose soule I pray God have mercy.

Finis

¹ take away. ² The line appears corrupt. One might supply *to before laude*.

BALLADS

LADY ISABEL AND THE ELF-KNIGHT

- 1 FAIR lady Isabel sits in her bower sewing,
Aye as the gowans¹ grow gay;
There she heard an elf-knight blawing
his horn.
The first morning in May.
- 2 'If I had yon horn that I hear blawing,
And yon elf-knight to sleep in my bosom.'
- 3 This maiden had scarcely these words
spoken,
Till in at her window the elf-knight has
luppen.²
- 4 'It's a very strange matter, fair maiden,'
said he,
'I canna blaw my horn but ye call on me.'
- 5 'But will ye go to yon greenwood side?
If ye canna gang,³ I will cause you to
ride.'
- 6 He leapt on a horse, and she on another,
And they rode on to the greenwood to-
gether.
- 7 'Light down, light down, lady Isabel,'
said he,
'We are come to the place where ye
are to die.'
- 8 'Hae mercy, hae mercy, kind sir, on me,
Till ance my dear father and mother I
see.'
- 9 'Seven king's-daughters here hae I slain,
And ye shall be the eight o them.'³⁰
- 10 'O sit down a while, lay your head on
my knee,
That we may hae some rest before that
I die.'

¹ daisies.

² leaped.

³ walk.

- 11 She stroak'd him sae fast, the nearer
he did creep,
Wi a sma charm she lulld him fast
asleep.
- 12 Wi his ain sword-belt sae fast as she
ban⁴ him,
Wi his ain dag-durk⁵ sae sair as she
dang⁶ him.
- 13 'If seven king's-daughters here ye hae
slain,
Lye ye here, a husband to them a'.'

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY⁷

- 1 'RISE up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas,'
she says,
'And put on your armour so bright,
Let it never be said that a daughter of
thine
Was married to a lord under night.'
- 2 'Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest
sister,
For your eldest's awa the last night.'
- 3 He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his
side,
And lightly they rode away.
- 4 Lord William lookit oer his left shoulder,
To see what he could see,
And there he spy'd her seven brethren
bold,
Come riding over the lee.
- 5 'Light down, light down, Lady Mar-
gret,' he said,
'And hold my steed in your hand,

⁴ bound.

⁵ dagger.

⁶ stabbed.

⁷ Also called *Earl Brand*.

- Until that against your seven brethren
bold,
And your father I mak a stand.' 20
- 6 She held his steed in her milk-white
hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren
fa,
And her father hard fighting, who
lovd her so dear.
- 7 'O hold your hand, Lord William !'
she said,
'For your strokes they are wondrous
sair;
True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father I can never get mair.'
- 8 O she's taen out her handkerchief,
It was o the holland sae fine, 30
And aye she dighted her father's bloody
wounds,
That were redder than the wine.
- 9 'O chuse, O chuse, Lady Margret,' he
said,
'O whether will ye gang or bide ?'
'I'll gang, I'll gang, Lord William,'
she said,
'For ye have left me no other guide.'
- 10 He's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his
side,
And slowly they baith rade away. 40
- 11 O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
And there they lighted down.
- 12 They lighted down to tak a drink
Of the spring than ran sae clear,
And down the stream ran his gude
heart's blood,
And sair she gan to fear.
- 13 'Hold up, hold up, Lord William,' she
says,
'For I fear that you are slain;' 50
'Tis naething but the shadow of my
scarlet cloak,
That shines in the water sae plain.'
- 14 O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they cam to his mother's ha door,
And there they lighted down.
- 15 'Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'Get up, and let me in !'
Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'For this night my fair lady I've
win. 60
- 16 'O mak my bed, lady mother,' he says,
'O mak it braid and deep,
And lay lady Margret close at my
back,
And the sounder I will sleep.'
- 17 Lord William was dead lang ere mid-
night,
Lady Margret lang ere day,
And all true lovers that go thegither,
May they have mair luck than they !
- 18 Lord William was buried in St. Mary's
kirk,
Lady Margret in Mary's quire; 70
Out o the lady's grave grew a bonny
red rose,
And out o the knight's a brier.
- 19 And they twa met, and they twa plat,¹
And fain they wad be near;
And a' the warld might ken right weel
They were twa lovers dear.
- 20 But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough !
For he pulld up the bonny brier,
And flang 't in St. Mary's Loch. 80

THE TWA SISTERS

- 1 THERE was twa sisters in a bowr,
Edinburgh, Edinburgh,
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
Stirling for ay,
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
There came a knight to be their wooer,
Bonny Saint Johnston stands upon
Tay.
- 2 He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
But he lovd the youngest above a' thing.
¹ pleated, entwined.

3 He courted the eldest wi brotch an
knife,¹⁰
But lovd the youngest as his life.

4 The eldest she was vexed sair,
An much envi'd her sister fair.

5 Into her bowr she could not rest,
Wi grief an spite she almos brast.¹

6 Upon a morning fair an clear,
She cried upon her sister dear:

7 'O sister, come to yon sea stran,
An see our father's ships come to lan.'

8 She's taen her by the milk-white han,
An led her down to yon sea stran.²¹

9 The younges[t] stood upon a stane,
The eldest came an threw her in.

10 She tooke her by the middle sma,
An dashd her bonny back to the jaw.²

11 'O sister, sister, tak my han,
An Ise³ mack you heir to a' my lan.

12 'O sister, sister, tak my middle,
An yes⁴ get my goud and my gouden
girdle.

13 'O sister, sister, save my life,³⁰
An I swear Ise never be nae man's wife.'

14 'Foul fa the han that I should tacke,
It twin'd me an my wardles make.⁵

15 'Your cherry cheeks an yallow hair
Gars me gae maiden for evermair.'

16 Sometimes she sank, an sometimes she
swam,
Till she came down yon bonny milldam.

17 O out it came the miller's son,
An saw the fair maid swimmin in.

18 'O father, father, draw your dam,⁴⁰
Here's either a mermaid or a swan.'

19 The miller quickly drew the dam,
An there he found a drownd woman.

¹ burst. ² waves. ³ I shall.
⁴ ye shall. ⁵ world's mate.

20 You coudna see her yallow hair
For gold and pearle that were so rare.

21 You coudna see her middle sma
For gouden girdle that was sae braw.

22 You coudna see her fingers white,
For gouden rings that was sae gryte.⁶

23 An by there came a harper fine,⁵⁰
That harped to the king at dine.

24 When he did look that lady upon,
He sighd and made a heavy moan.

25 He's taen three locks o her yallow hair,
An wi them strung his harp sae fair.

26 The first tune he did play and sing,
Was, 'Farewell to my father the king.'

27 The nextin tune that he playd syne,⁷
Was, 'Farewell to my mother the queen.'

28 The lasten tune that he playd then,⁶⁰
Was, 'Wae to my sister, fair Ellen.'

THE CRUEL BROTHER

1 THERE was three ladies playd at the
ba,
With a hey ho and a lillie gay,
There came a knight and played oer
them a'.
As the primrose spreads so sweetly.

2 The eldest was baith tall and fair,
But the youngest was beyond compare.

3 The midmost had a graceful mien,
But the youngest lookd like beautie's
queen.

4 The knight bowd low to a' the three,
But to the youngest he bent his knee.¹⁰

5 The ladie turned her head aside,
The knight he woo'd her to be his
bride.

6 The ladie blushd a rosy red,
And sayd, 'Sir knight, I'm too young
to wed.'

⁶ great. ⁷ after.

- 7 'O ladie fair, give me your hand,
And I'll make you ladie of a' my land.'
- 8 'Sir knight, ere ye my favor win,
You maun get consent frae a' my kin.'
- 9 He's got consent frae her parents dear,
And likewise frae her sisters fair. 20
- 10 He's got consent frae her kin each one,
But forgot to spiek to her brother John.
- 11 Now, when the wedding day was come,
The knight would take his bonny bride
home.
- 12 And many a lord and many a knight
Came to behold that ladie bright.
- 13 And there was nae man that did her see
But wishd himself bridegroom to be.
- 14 Her father dear led her down the stair,
And her sisters twain they kissd her
there. 30
- 15 Her mother dear led her thro the closs,¹
And her brother John set her on her
horse.
- 16 She leand her oer the saddle-bow,
To give him a kiss ere she did go.
- 17 He has taen a knife, baith lang and
sharp,
And stabbd that bonny bride to the
heart.
- 18 She hadno ridden half thro the town,
Until her heart's blude staind her gown.
- 19 'Ride softly on,' says the best young
man,
'For I think our bonny bride looks
pale and wan.' 40
- 20 'O lead me gently up yon hill,
And I'll there sit down, and make my
will.'
- 21 'O what will you leave to your father
dear?'
'The silver-shode steed that brought
me here.'

¹ close, court-yard.

- 22 'What will you leave to your mother
dear?'
'My velvet pall and my silken gear.'
- 23 'What will you leave to your sister
Anne?'
'My silken scarf and my gowden fan.'
- 24 'What will you leave to your sister
Grace?'
'My bloody cloaths to wash and dress.' 50
- 25 'What will you leave to your brother
John?'
'The gallows-tree to hang him on.'
- 26 'What will you leave to your brother
John's wife?'
'The wilderness to end her life.'
- 27 This ladie fair in her grave was laid,
And many a mass was oer her said.
- 28 But it would have made your heart
right sair,
To see the bridegroom rive his haire.

EDWARD

- 1 'WHY dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward?
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?'
'O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O.'
- 2 'Your hankis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your hankis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O.' 10
'O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O.'
- 3 'Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat
mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat
mair,
Sum other dule² ye drie³ O.' 20
² grief. ³ suffer.

- 'O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O !'
- 4 'And whatten penance wul ye drie for
that,
Edward, Edward?
And whatten penance will ye drie for
that ?
My deir son, now tell me O.'
'Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither, 30
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O.'
- 5 'And what wul ye doe wi your towirs
and your ha,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul you doe wi your towirs
and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O ?'
'Ile let thame stand tul they doun
fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand till they doun
fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O.' 40
- 6 'And what wul ye leive to your bairns
and your wife,
Edward, Edward ?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns
and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O ?'
'The warldis room, late them beg thrae
life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae
life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see
O.'
- 7 'And what wul ye leive to your ain
mither deir,
Edward, Edward ?
And what wul ye leive to your ain
mither deir ? 51
My deir son, now tell me O.'
'The curse of hell frae me sall ye
beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye
beir,
Sic counsels ye gave to me O.'

BABYLON; OR, THE BONNIE BANKS O FORDIE

- 1 THERE were three ladies lived in a
bower,
Eh vow bonnie,
And they went out to pull a flower,
On the bonnie banks o Fordie.
- 2 They hadna pu'ed a flower but ane,
When up started to them a banisht
man.
- 3 He's taen the first sister by her hand,
And he's turned her round and made
her stand.
- 4 'It's whether will ye be a rank rob-
ber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife ?' 10
- 5 'It's I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
But I'll rather die by your wee pen-
knife.'
- 6 He's killed this may, and he's laid her
by,
For to bear the red rose company.
- 7 He's taken the second ane by the hand,
And he's turned her round and made
her stand.
- 8 'It's whether will ye be a rank rob-
ber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife ?'
- 9 'I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
But I'll rather die by your wee pen-
knife.' 20
- 10 He's killed this may, and he's laid her
by,
For to bear the red rose company.
- 11 He's taken the youngest ane by the
hand,
And he's turned her round and made
her stand.
- 12 Says, 'Will ye be a rank robber's
wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife ?'
- 13 'I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Nor will I die by your wee pen-knife.'

- 14 'For I hae a brother in this wood,
And gin ye kill me, it 's he'll kill
thee.' 30
- 15 'What's thy brother's name? come
tell to me.'
'My brother's name is Baby Lon.'
- 16 'O sister, sister, what have I done!
O have I done this ill to thee!
- 17 'O since I've done this evil deed,
Good sall never be seen o me.'
- 18 He's taken out his wee pen-knife,
And he's twyned¹ himsel o his ain
sweet life.

HIND HORN²

- 1 IN Scotland there was a babie born,
And his name it was called young Hind
Horn.
Lilie lal, etc. With a fal lal, etc.
- 2 He sent a letter to our king
That he was in love with his daughter
Jean.
- 3 He's gien to her a silver wand,
With seven living lavrocks³ sitting
thereon.
- 4 She's gien to him a diamond ring,
With seven bright diamonds set therein.
- 5 'When this ring grows pale and wan, ¹⁰
You may know by it my love is gane.'
- 6 One day as he looked his ring upon,
He saw the diamonds pale and wan.
- 7 He left the sea and came to land,
And the first that he met was an old
beggar man.
- 8 'What news, what news,' said young
Hind Horn;
'No news, no news,' said the old beg-
gar man.

¹ deprived.² An ancient and widespread story having some connection with the Middle-English romance, *The Gest of King Horn*. See Professor Child's remarks, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Part 1, 201. ³ larks.

- 9 'No news,' said the beggar, 'no news
at a',
But there's a wedding in the king's
ha.
- 10 'But there is a wedding in the king's
ha, ³⁰
That has halden these forty days and
twa.'
- 11 'Will ye lend me your begging coat?
And I'll lend you my scarlet cloak.'
- 12 'Will you lend me your beggar's rung⁴?
And I'll gie you my steed to ride upon.'
- 13 'Will you lend me your wig o hair,
To cover mine, because it is fair?'
- 14 The auld beggar man was bound for
the mill,
But young Hind Horn for the king's
hall.
- 15 The auld beggar man was bound for to
ride, ³⁰
But young Hind Horn was bound for
the bride.
- 16 When he came to the king's gate,
He sought a drink for Hind Horn's
sake.
- 17 The bride came down with a glass of
wine,
When he drank out the glass, and dropt
in the ring.
- 18 'O got ye this by sea or land?
Or got ye it off a dead man's hand?'
- 19 'I got not it by sea, I got it by land,
And I got it, madam, out of your own
hand.'
- 20 'O I'll cast off my gowns of brown, ⁴⁰
And beg wi you frae town to town.
- 21 'O I'll cast off my gowns of red,
And I'll beg wi you to win my bread.'
- 22 'Ye needna cast off your gowns of
brown,
For I'll make you lady o many a town.

⁴ staff.

23 'Ye needna cast off your gowns of red,
It's only a sham the begging o my bread.'

24 The bridegroom he had wedded the bride,
But young Hind Horn he took her to bed.

KING ORFEO¹

1 DER lived a king inta da aste,²
Scowan tirla grün.³
Der lived a lady in da wast.⁴
Whar giorten han grün oarlac.³

2 Dis king he has a huntin gaen
He's left his Lady Isabel alane.

3 'Oh I wis ye'd never gaen away,
For at your hame is döl⁵ an wae.

4 'For da king o Ferrie we his daert,
Has pierced your lady to da hert.' ¹⁰

5 And aifter dem da king has gaen,
But whan he cam it was a grey stane.

6 Dan he took oot his pipes ta play,
Bit sair his hert wi döl an wae.

7 And first he played da notes o noy,
An dan he played da notes o joy.

8 An dan he played da göd gabber reel,⁶
Dat meicht ha made a sick hert hale.

9 'Noo come ye in inta wir⁷ ha,
An come ye in among wis⁸ a'.' ²⁰

10 Now he's gane in inta der ha,
An he's gane in among dem a'.

11 Dan he took out his pipes to play,
Bit sair his hert wi döl an wae.

12 An first he played da notes o noy,
An dan he played da notes o joy.

13 An dan he played da göd gabber reel,
Dat meicht ha made a sick hert hale.

¹ This ballad from the Shetland Islands tells the strangely modified story of Orpheus and Eurydice; yet it is not so very unlike the mediaeval version, *King Orpheo*, a beautiful romance, printed in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*, II, 248; and turned into modern verses by E. E. Hunt, Cambridge, Mass., 1909.

² east. ³ The Scandinavian refrain is practically meaningless. ⁴ west. ⁵ grief. ⁶ The good gabber reel is some lively tune. ⁷ our. ⁸ us.

14 'Noo tell to us what ye will hae:
What sall we gie you for your play?' ³⁰

15 'What I will hae I will you tell,
An dat's me Lady Isabel.'

16 'Yees tak your lady, an yees gaeng
hame,
An yees be king ower a' your ain.'

17 He's taen his lady, an he's gaen hame,
An noo he's king ower a' his ain.

ST. STEPHEN AND HEROD⁹

1 SEYNT Steven was a clerk in kyng
Herowdes halle,
And servyd him of bred and clop,¹⁰ as
every kyng befalla.

2 Stevyn out of kechone¹¹ cam, wyth boris
hed on honde;
He saw a sterre was fayr and bryzt over
Bedlem stonde.

3 He kyst adoun pe boris hed and went in
to pe halle:
'I forsak pe, kyng Herowdes, and pi
werkes alle.

4 'I forsak pe, kyng Herowdes, and pi
werkes alle;
per is a chyld in Bedlem born is beten
pan we alle.'

5 'Quat eylyt¹² pe, Steven? quat is pe
befalle?
Lakkyt pe¹³ eyper mete or drynk in kyng
Herowdes halle?' ¹⁰

6 'Lakit me neyper mete ne drynk in kyng
Herowdes halle;
per is a chyld in Bedlem born is beten
pan we alle.'

7 Quat eylyt pe, Stevyn? art pu wod,¹⁴ or
pu gynnyst to brede? ¹⁵
Lakkyt pe eyper gold or fe, or ony ryche
wede?'

⁹ This version is as old as the fifteenth century. With it may be compared the eighteenth-century carol, *The Carnel (Crow) and the Crane*, No. 55 in the Sargent-Kittredge volume. ¹⁰ cloth. This is written *þ* throughout the ballad. ¹¹ kitchen. ¹² What alieth. ¹³ Do you lack. ¹⁴ mad. ¹⁵ wander, rave (probably).

- 8 'Lakyt me neyper gold ne fe, ne non
ryche wede;
per is a chyld in Bedlem born xal¹ hel-
pyn vs at our nede.'
- 9 'pat is al so sop,² Stevyn, al so sop, iwys,
As pis capoun crowe xal pat lyp here in
myn dysh.'
- 10 pat word was not so sone seyd, pat word
in pat halle,
pe capoun crew *Cristus natus est!* among
pe lordes alle. 20
- 11 'Rysyt³ vp, myn turmentowres,⁴ be to
and al be on,
And ledyt Stevyn out of pis town, and
stonyt hym wyth ston!'
- 12 Tokyn he Stevenne, and stonyd hym in
the way,
And perfore is his evyn on Crystes owyn
day.

JUDAS⁵

- 1 Hrt wes upon a Scereporsday⁶ pat ure
louerd aros;
Ful milde were pe wordes he spec⁷ to
Iudas.
- 2 'Iudas, pou most to Iurselem, oure mete
for to bugge;⁸
pritti platen of selver pou bere up opi
rugge.⁹
- 3 'pou comest fer ipe¹⁰ brode stret, fer ipe
brode strete;
Summe of pine tunesmen per pou meist
i-mete.'
- 4 Imette wid is soster, pe swikele¹¹ wimon:
'Iudas, pou were wrpe¹² me stende¹³
pe wid ston;
- 5 ['Iudas, pou were wrpe me stende pe
wid ston,]
For pe false prophete pat tou bilevest
upon. 10

- 6 'Be stille, leve soster, pin herte pe to-
breke!¹⁴
Wiste min louerd Crist, ful wel he wolde
be wreke.'¹⁵
- 7 'Iudas, go pou on pe roc, heie up-on pe
ston;
Lei pin heued i my barm,¹⁶ slep pou pe
anon.'
- 8 Sone so Iudas of slepe was awake,
pritti platen of selver from hym weren
itake.
- 9 He drou hym selue bi pe cop, pat al it
lavede ablode;¹⁷
pe Iewes out of Iurselem awenden¹⁸ he
were wode.¹⁹
- 10 Foret²⁰ hym com pe riche Ieu pat heiste²¹
Pilatus:
'Wolte sulle²² pi louerd, pat hette²³ Ie-
sus?' 20
- 11 'I nul²⁴ sulle my louerd for nones cunnes
eiste,²⁵
Bote hit be for pe pritti platen pat he
me bi-taiste.'²⁶
- 12 'Wolte sulle pi lord Crist for enes cunnes
golde?'
'Nay, bote hit be for pe platen pat he
habben wolde.'²⁷
- 13 In him com ur lord gon, as is postles
seten at mete:
'Wou²⁸ sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule²⁹
ye ete?
- 14 ['Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye
ete?]
Ic am iboust³⁰ ant isold to-day for oure
mete.'
- 15 Vp stod him Iudas: 'Lord, am I pat...?
I nas³¹ never ope stude³² per me pe
euel spec.'³³ 30

1 shall. 2 sooth, true. 3 Rise. 4 executioners.
5 The oldest of our ballad manuscripts, being from
MS. B 14, 39, of the thirteenth century, library of
Trinity College, Cambridge. 6 Sheer Thursday.
7 spake. 8 buy. 9 upon thy back. 10 in the,
11 treacherous. 12 worthy 13 one stoned.

14 may thy heart break. 15 avenged. 16 bosom.
17 He tore his hair (beat his head) till it all ran blood.
18 weened. 19 mad. 20 Before. 21 was called.
22 Wilt thou sell. 23 is called. 24 will not.
25 no kind of possession. 26 entrusted to.
27 wished to have. 28 how. 29 why will not.
30 bought. 31 was not. 32 in the place.
33 where one spoke evil of you.

- 16 Vp him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is
miste,¹
pau Pilatus him come wid ten hundred
cnistes,²
- 17 ['pau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred
cnistes,]
Yet ic wolde, louerd, for pi loue fiste.³
- 18 'Still pou be, Peter, wel I pe i-cnowe;
pou wolt fur-sake me prien⁴ ar pe coc
him crowe.'

THE THREE RAVENS

- 1 THERE were three ravens sat on a tree,
Downe a downe, hay downe, hay downe
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
With a downe
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
They were as blacke as they might be.
With a downe derrie, derrie, derrie,
downe, downe.
- 2 The one of them said to his mate,
'Where shall we our breakefast take?'
- 3 'Downe in yonder greene field, ¹⁰
There lies a knight slain under his
shield.
- 4 'His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
So well they can their master keepe.
- 5 'His haukes they flie so eagerly,
There 's no fowle dare him come nie.'
- 6 Downe there comes a fallow doe,
As great with yong as she might goe.
- 7 She lift up his bloody hed,
And kist his wounds that were so red.
- 8 She got him up vpon her backe, ²⁰
And carried him to earthen lake.⁵
- 9 She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herselfe ere even-song time.
- 10 God send every gentleman,
Such haukes, such hounds, and such a
leman.⁶

¹ might. ² knights. ³ fight. ⁴ thrice.
⁵ pit. ⁶ sweetheart.

THE TWA CORBIES

- 1 As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane⁷;
The tane unto the t'other say,
'Where sall we gang and dine to-day?'
- 2 'In behint yon auld fail⁸ dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.
- 3 'His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame, ¹⁰
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.
- 4 'Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,⁹
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We'll theek¹⁰ our nest when it grows
bare.
- 5 'Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.' ²⁰

KING HENRY ¹¹

- 1 LAT never a man a wooing wend
That lacketh thingis three;
A outh¹² o gold, an open heart,
Ay fu o charity.
- 2 As this I speak of King Henry,
For he lay burd-alone;¹³
An he's doen him to a jelly hunt's ha,¹⁴
Was seven miles frae a town.
- 3 He chas'd the deer now him before,
An the roe down by the den, ¹⁰
Till the fattest buck in a' the flock
King Henry he has slain.
- 4 O he has doen him to his ha,
To make him beerly ¹⁵ cheer;
An in it came a griesly ghost,
Steed stappin i the floor.¹⁶

⁷ moan. ⁸ turf. ⁹ neck-bone. ¹⁰ thatch.

¹¹ A more polished version of this story is found in the mutilated ballad of *The Marriage of Sir Gawain* (No. 31 in Child). There are several Celtic analogues, some of great age. The whole set is discussed in G. H. Maynard's *Wife of Bath's Tale*, London, 1901.

¹² plenty. ¹³ quite solitary. ¹⁴ a jolly hunting.
lodge. ¹⁵ great. ¹⁶ stood hesitating on the floor.

- 5 Her head hat the reef-tree ¹ o the house,
Her middle ye mot wel span;
He's thrown to her his gay mantle,
Says, 'Lady, hap your lincan.'² 20
- 6 Her teeth was a' like teather stakes,
Her nose like club or mell;³
An I ken naething she 'peard to be,
But the fiend that wons ⁴ in hell.
- 7 'Some meat, some meat, ye King Henry,
Some meat ye gi to me !'
'An what meat 's in this house, lady,
An what ha I to gie ?'
'O ye do kill your berry-brown steed,
An you bring him here to me.' 30
- 8 O whan he slew his berry-brown steed,
Wow but his heart was sair !
Shee eat him [a'] up, skin an bane,
Left naething but hide an hair.
- 9 'Mair meat, mair meat, ye King Henry,
Mair meat ye gi to me !'
'An what meat 's in this house, lady,
An what ha I to gie ?'
'O ye do kill your good gray-hounds,
An ye bring them a' to me.' 40
- 10 O whan he slew his good gray-hounds,
Wow but his heart was sair !
She eat them a' up, skin an bane,
Left naething but hide an hair.
- 11 'Mair meat, mair meat, ye King Henry,
Mair meat ye gi to me !'
'An what meat 's i this house, lady,
An what ha I to gie ?'
'O ye do kill your gay gos-hawks,
An ye bring them here to me.' 50
- 12 O whan he slew his gay gos-hawks,
Wow but his heart was sair !
She eat them a' up, skin an bane,
Left naething but feathers bare.
- 13 'Some drink, some drink, now, King
Henry,
Some drink ye bring to me !'
'O what drink 's i this house, lady,
That you 're nae welcome ti ?'
'O ye sew up your horse's hide,
An bring in a drink to me.' 60
- 14 And he 's sewd up the bloody hide,
A puncheon o wine put in;
She drank it a' up at a waught,⁵
Left na ae drap ahin.⁶
- 15 'A bed, a bed, now, King Henry,
A bed you mak to me !
For ye maun pu the heather green,
An mak a bed to me.'
- 16 O pu'd has he the heather green,
An made to her a bed, 70
An up has he taen his gay mantle,
An oer it has he spread.
- 17 'Tak aff your claiths, now, King Henry,
An lye down by my side !'
'O God forbid,' says King Henry,
'That ever the like betide;
That ever the fiend that wons in hell
Shoud streak⁷ down by my side.'
- 18 Whan night was gane, and day was
come,
An the sun shone throw the ha, 80
The fairest lady that ever was seen
Lay atween him an the wa.
- 19 'O well is me !' says King Henry,
'How lang 'll this last wi me ?'
Then out it spake that fair lady,
'Even till the day you dee.
- 20 'For I've met wi mony a gentle knight
That 's gien me sic a fill,
But never before wi a courteous knight
That ga me a' my will.' 90

KEMP OWYNE ⁸

- 1 HER mother died when she was young.
Which gave her cause to make great
moan;
Her father married the warst woman
That ever lived in Christendom.
- 2 She served her with foot and hand,
In every thing that she could dee,⁹
Till once, in an unlucky time,
She threw her in ower Craigy's sea.

⁵ draught. ⁶ behind. ⁷ stretch.⁸ Also called *Kempion*. Owyne is Owain or Ywain, one of Arthur's knights, who in the romances has many adventures, but not this. Disenchantment thus by a kiss is a commonplace in romance. ⁹ do.¹ hit the roof-tree. ² wrap your body.
³ maul. ⁴ dwells.

- 3 Says, 'Lie you there, dove Isabel,
And all my sorrows lie with thee; ¹⁰
Till Kemp Owyne come over the sea,
And borrow ¹ you with kisses three,
Let all the world do what they will,
Oh borrowed shall you never be!'
- 4 Her breath grew strang, her hair grew lang,
And twisted thrice about the tree,
And all the people, far and near,
Thought that a savage beast was she.
- 5 These news did come to Kemp Owyne,
Where he lived, far beyond the sea;
He hasted him to Craigy's sea, ²¹
And on the savage beast lookd he.
- 6 Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
And twisted was about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.
- 7 'Here is a royal belt,' she cried,
'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
Drawn shall your blood never be; ³⁰
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
I vow my belt your death shall be.'
- 8 He stepped in, gave her a kiss,
The royal belt he brought him wi;
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
And twisted twice about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.
- 9 'Here is a royal ring,' she said,
'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your finger it is on, ⁴¹
Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
I swear my ring your death shall be.'
- 10 He stepped in, gave her a kiss,
The royal ring he brought him wi;
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
And twisted ance about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.
- 11 'Here is a royal brand,' she said,
'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
I swear my brand your death shall be.'
- 12 He stepped in, gave her a kiss,
The royal brand he brought him wi;
Her breath was sweet, her hair grew short,
And twisted nane about the tree, ⁶⁰
And smilingly she came about,
As fair a woman as fair could be.

THE LAILY WORM AND THE MACHREL OF THE SEA

- 1 'I was bat seven year all'd
Fan ² my mider she did dee,
My father marr'd the ae ³ warst woman
The wardle ⁴ did ever see.
- 2 'For she has made me the laily ⁵ worm
That lays att the fitt ⁶ of the tree,
An o my sister Meassry
The machrel of the sea.
- 3 'An every Saturday att noon
The machrl comes to me, ¹⁰
An she takes my layl'd head,
An lays it on her knee,
An keames it we a silver kemm,⁷
An washes it in the sea.
- 4 'Seven knights ha I slain
Sane ⁸ I lay att the fitt of the tree;
An ye war na my ain father,
The eight an ye sud be.'
- 5 'Sing on your song, ye l[a]ily worm, ²⁰
That ye sung to me;
'I never sung that song
But fatt ⁹ I wad sing to ye.
- 6 'I was but seven year aull
Fan my mider she [did] dee,
My father marr'd the a warst woman
The wardle did ever see.

¹ When. ² one. ⁴ world. ⁵ loathly.
⁶ foot. ⁷ combs it with a silver comb.
⁸ Since. ⁹ what.

- 7 'She changed me to the layel^[y] worm
That layes att the fitt of the tree,
An my sister Messry
[To] the makrell of the sea. 30
- 8 'And every Saturday att noon
The machrell comes to me,
An she takes my layly head,
An layes it on her knee,
An kames it weth a siller kame,
An washes it in the sea.
- 9 'Seven knights ha I slain
San I lay att the fitt of the tree;
An ye war na my ain father,
The eight ye sud be.' 40
- 10 He sent for his lady
As fast as sen cod¹ he:
'Far² is my son,
That ye sent fra me,
And my daughter,
Lady Messry?'
- 11 'Yer son is att our king's court,
Sarving for meatt an fee,
And yer daugh[t]er is att our quinn's court,
A mary suit³ an free.' 50
- 12 'Ye lee,⁴ ye ill woman,
Sa loud as I hear ye lea,
For my son is the layly worm
That lays at the fitt of the tree,
An my daughter Messry
The machrell of the sea.'
- 13 She has tain a silver wan
An gine him stroks three,
An he started up the bravest knight
Your eyes did ever see. 60
- 14 She has tane a small horn
An loud an shill⁵ blue she,
An a' the fish came her tell⁶ but the
proud machrell,
An she stood by the sea:
Ye shaped me ance an unshemly shape,
An ye's never mare shape me.'
- 15 He has sent to the wood
For hathorn an fun,⁷
An he has tane that gay lady,
An ther he did her burne. 70

THOMAS RYMER AND THE
QUEEN OF ELFLAND⁸

- 1 TRUE THOMAS lay oer yond grassy bank,
And he beheld a ladie gay,
A ladie that was brisk and bold,
Come riding oer the fernie brae.
- 2 Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantel of the velvet fine,
At ilka tett⁹ of her horse's mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine.
- 3 True Thomas he took off his hat,
And bowed him low down till his
knee: 10
'Al hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For your peer on earth I never did
see.'
- 4 'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
'That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
And I'm come here for to visit thee.
- 5 'But ye maun go wi me now, Thomas,
True Thomas, ye maun go wi me,
For ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro weel or wae as may chance
to be.' 20
- 6 She turned about her milk-white steed
And took True Thomas up behind,
And aye whenever her bridle rang,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.
- 7 For forty days and forty nights
He wade thro red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the roaring of the sea.
- 8 O they rade on, and further on,
Until they came to a garden green: 30
'Light down, light down, ye ladie free,
Some of that fruit let me pull to
thee.'
- 9 'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
'That fruit maun not be touched by
thee,
For a' the plagues that are in hell
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

⁸ For a discussion of this typical other-world journey and its relation to the fifteenth-century romance of *Thomas of Erceuldoune*, see Child, 1, 323. ⁹ tuft.

¹ send could. ² Where. ³ maid-of-honor sweet.
⁴ lie. ⁵ shrill. ⁶ to. ⁷ whin, gorse.

- 10 'But I have a loaf here in my lap,
Likewise a bottle of claret wine,
And now ere we go farther on,
We'll rest a while, and ye may dine.' ³⁹
- 11 When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
'Lay down your head upon my knee,'
The lady said, 'ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you fairlies¹ three.
- 12 'O see not ye yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho after it but few enquires.
- 13 'And see not ye that braid braid road,
That lies across yon lillie leven? ² ⁵⁰
That is the path of wickedness,
Tho some call it the road to heaven.
- 14 'And see not ye that bonnie road,
Which winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Whe[re] you and I this night maun
gae.
- 15 'But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever you may hear or see,
For gin ae word you should chance to
speak,
You will neer get back to your ain
countrie.' ⁶⁰
- 16 He has gotten a coat of the even³ cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
And till seven years were past and gone
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

THE WEE WEE MAN

- 1 As I was wa'king all alone,
Between a water and a wa,⁴
And there I spy'd a wee wee man,
And he was the least that ere I saw.
- 2 His legs were scarce a shathmont's ⁵
length,
And thick and thimber⁶ was his
thigh;
Between his brows there was a span,
And between his shoulders there was
three.

¹ wonders.
⁴ wall.

² glade, lawn.

⁵ a palm, six inches.

³ smooth.
⁶ great.

- 3 He took up a meikle⁷ stane,
And he flang't as far as I could
see;
Though I had been a Wallace wight,
I couldna liften't to my knee.
- 4 'O wee wee man, but thou be strang!
O tell me where thy dwelling be?
My dwelling's down at yon bonny
bower;
O will you go with me and see?'
- 5 On we lap,⁸ and awa we rade,
Till we came to yon bonny green;
We lighted down for to bait our horse,
And out there came a lady fine. ²⁰
- 6 Four and twenty at her back,
And they were a' clad out in green;
Though the King of Scotland had been
there,
The warst o them might hae been
his queen.
- 7 On we lap, and awa we rade,
Till we came to yon bonny ha,
Whare the roof was o the beaten gould,
And the floor was o the cristal a'.
- 8 When we came to the stair-foot,
Ladies were dancing, jimp and sma, ³⁰
But in the twinkling of an eye,
My wee wee man was clean awa.

TAM LIN

- 1 O I FORBID you, maidens a',
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tam Lin is there.
- 2 There's nane that gaes by Carterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,⁹
Either their rings, or green mantles,
Or else their maidenhead.
- 3 Janet has kilted ¹⁰ her green kirtle
A little aboon ¹¹ her knee,
And she has broded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,¹²
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

⁷ great.

¹⁰ tucked up.

⁸ leaped.

¹¹ above.

⁹ pledge.
¹² brow.

- 4 When she came to Carterhaugh
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.
- 5 She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa, ²⁰
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, 'Lady, thou's pu nae mae.'¹
- 6 'Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
And why breaks thou the wand?
Or why comes thou to Carterhaugh
Withoutten my command?'
- 7 'Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
My daddie gave it me;
I'll come and gang by Carterhaugh,
And ask nae leave at thee.' ³⁰
- 8 Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded² her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she is to her father's ha,
As fast as she can hie.
- 9 Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the ba,
And out then cam the fair Janet,
Ance the flower amang them a'. ⁴⁰
- 10 Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the chess,
And out then cam the fair Janet,
As green as onie glass.
- 11 Out then spak an auld grey knight,
Lay oer the castle wa,
And says, 'Alas, fair Janet, for thee
But we'll be blamed a'.'
- 12 'Haud your tongue, ye auld fac'd knight,
Some ill death may ye die! ⁵⁰
Father my bairn on whom I will,
I'll father nane on thee.'
- 13 Out then spak her father dear,
And he spak meek and mild;
'And ever alas, sweet Janet,' he says,
'I think thou gaes wi child.'
- 14 'If that I gae wi child, father,
Mysel maun bear the blame;
¹ no more. ² tied in a snood.
- There's neer a laird about your ha
Shall get the bairn's name. ⁶⁰
- 15 'If my love were an earthly knight,
As he's an elfin grey,
I wad na gie my ain true-love
For nae lord that ye hae.
- 16 'The steed that my true-love rides on
Is lighter than the wind;
Wi siller he is shod before,
Wi burning gowd behind.'
- 17 Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee, ⁷⁰
And she has snooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.
- 18 When she cam to Carterhaugh,
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.
- 19 She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa, ⁸⁰
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, 'Lady, thou pu's nae mae.'
- 20 'Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
Amang the groves sae green,
And a' to kill the bonie babe
That we gat us between?'
- 21 'O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin,' she says,
'For's sake that died on tree,
If eer ye was in holy chapel,
Or christendom did see?' ⁹⁰
- 22 'Roxbrugh he was my grandfather,
Took me with him to bide,
And ance it fell upon a day
That wae did me betide.
- 23 'And ance it fell upon a day,
A cauld day and a snell,³
When we were frae the hunting come,
That frae my horse I fell;
The Queen o Fairies she caught me,
In yon green hill to dwell. ¹⁰⁰
- 24 'And pleasant is the fairy land;
But, an eerie tale to tell,
³ keen.

- Ay at the end of seven years
We pay a tiend¹ to hell;
I am sae fair and fu o flesh,
I'm feared it be mysel.
- 25 'But the night is Halloween, lady,
The morn is Hallowday;
Then win me, win me, an ye will,
For weel I wat ye may. 110
- 26 'Just at the mirk and midnight hour
The fairy folk will ride,
And they that wad their true-love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide.'
- 27 'But how shall I thee ken, Tam Lin,
Or how my true-love know,
Amang sae mony unco² knights
The like I never saw?'
- 28 'O first let pass the black, lady,
And syne let pass the brown, 120
But quickly run to the milk-white steed,
Pu ye his rider down.
- 29 'For I'll ride on the milk-white steed,
And ay nearest the town;
Because I was an earthly knight
They gie me that renown.
- 30 'My right hand will be glovd, lady,
My left hand will be bare,
Cockt up shall my bonnet be,
And kaimd down shall my hair, 130
And thae's the takens I gie thee,
Nae doubt I will be there.
- 31 'They'll turn me in your arms, lady,
Into an esk³ and adder;
But hold me fast and fear me not,
I am your bairn's father.
- 32 'They'll turn me to a bear sae grim,
And then a lion bold;
But hold me fast and fear me not,
As ye shall love your child. 140
- 33 'Again they'll turn me in your arms
To a red het gaud of airn;⁴
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I'll do to you nae harm.
- 34 'And last they'll turn me in your arms
Into the burning gleed;⁵
- Then throw me into well water,
O throw me in wi speed.
- 35 'And then I'll be your ain true-love,
I'll turn a naked knight; 150
Then cover me wi your green mantle,
And cover me out o sight.'
- 36 Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way,
As fair Jenny in her green mantle
To Miles Cross she did gae.
- 37 About the middle o the night
She heard the bridles ring;
This lady was as glad at that
As any earthly thing. 160
- 38 First she let the black pass by,
And syne she let the brown;
But quickly she ran to the milk-white
steed,
And pu'd the rider down.
- 39 Sae weel she minded what he did say,
And young Tam Lin did win;
Syne coverd him wi her green mantle,
As blythe's a bird in spring.
- 40 Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
Out of a bush o broom: 170
'Them that has gotten young Tam Lin
Has gotten a stately groom.'
- 41 Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
And an angry woman was she:
'Shame betide her ill-far'd⁶ face,
And an ill death may she die,
For she's taen awa the boniest knight
In a' my companie.
- 42 'But had I kend, Tam Lin,' she says,
'What now this night I see, 180
I wad hae taen out thy twa grey een,
And put in twa een o tree.'

YOUNG AKIN OR HIND ETIN⁸

- 1 LADY MARGARET sits in her bower door,
Sewing at her silken seam;
She heard a note in Elmond's wood,
And wishd she there had been.

¹ tithe. ² strange. ³ newt.
⁴ red-hot bar of iron. ⁵ coal.

⁶ ill-favored. ⁷ wood.
⁸ This story of a mortal and her fairy husband has
suffered in the handing down of it.

- 2 She loot ¹ the seam fa frae her side,
And the needle to her tae,
And she is on to Elmond's wood
As fast as she coud gae.
- 3 She hadna pu'd a nut, a nut,
Nor broken a branch but ane, ¹⁰
Till by it came a young hind chiel,²
Says, 'Lady, lat alane.
- 4 'O why pu ye the nut, the nut,
Or why brake ye the tree?
For I am forester o this wood:
Ye shoud spier ³ leave at me.'
- 5 'I'll ask leave at no living man,
Nor yet will I at thee;
My father is king oer a' this realm,
This wood belongs to me.' ²⁰
- 6 She hadna pu'd a nut, a nut,
Nor broken a branch but three,
Till by it came him Young Akin,
And gard her lat them be.
- 7 The highest tree in Elmond's wood,
He's pu'd it by the reet ⁴
And he has built for her a bower,
Near by a hallow ⁵ seat.
- 8 He's built a bower, made it secure
Wi carbuncle and stane; ³⁰
Tho travellers were never sae nigh,
Appearance it had nane.
- 9 He's kept her there in Elmond's wood,
For six lang years and one,
Till six pretty sons to him she bear,
And the seventh she's brought home.
- 10 It fell ance upon a day,
This guid lord went from home,
And he is to the hunting gane,
Took wi him his eldest son. ⁴⁰
- 11 And when they were on a guid way,
Wi slowly pace did walk,
The boy's heart being something wae,
He thus began to talk:
- 12 'A question I woud ask, father,
Gin ye woudna angry be:'
'Say on, say on, my bonny boy,
Ye'se nae be quarrelld by me.'
- 13 'I see my mither's cheeks aye weet,
I never can see them dry; ⁵⁰
And I wonder what aileth my mither,
To mourn continually.'
- 14 'Your mither was a king's daughter,
Sprung frae a high degree,
And she might hae wed some worthy
prince,
Had she nae been stown ⁶ by me.
- 15 'I was her father's cup-bearer,
Just at that fatal time;
I catchd her on a misty night,
Whan summer was in prime. ⁶⁰
- 16 'My luve to her was most sincere,
Her luve was great for me,
But when she hardships doth endure,
Her folly she does see.'
- 17 'I'll shoot the buntin o the bush,
The linnet o the tree,
And bring them to my dear mither,
See if she'll merrier be.'
- 18 It fell upo another day,
This guid lord he thought lang, ⁷⁰
And he is to the hunting gane,
Took wi him his dog and gun.
- 19 Wi bow and arrow by his side,
He's aff, single, alane,
And left his seven children to stay
Wi their mither at hame.
- 20 'O I will tell to you, mither,
Gin ye wadna angry be:'
'Speak on, speak on, my little wee boy,
Ye'se nae be quarrelld by me.' ⁸⁰
- 21 'As we came frae the hynd-hunting,
We heard fine music ring:'
'My blessings on you, my bonny boy,
I wish I'd been there my lane.'⁷
- 22 He's taen his mither by the hand,
His six brithers also,
And they are on thro Elmond's wood,
As fast as they coud go.
- 23 They wistna weel where they were gaen,
Wi the stratlins ⁸ o their feet; ⁹⁰
They wist na weel where they were gaen,
Till at her father's yate.⁹

¹ let. ² courteous youth. ³ ask. ⁴ root. ⁵ hollow.

⁶ stolen. ⁷ alone. ⁸ stridings. ⁹ gate.

- 24 'I hae nae money in my pocket,
But royal rings hae three;
I'll gie them you, my little young sòn,
And ye'll walk there for me.
- 25 'Ye'll gie the first to the proud porter,
And he will lat you in;
Ye'll gie the next to the butler-boy,
And he will show you ben;¹ 100
- 26 'Ye'll gie the third to the minstrel
That plays before the king;
He'll play success to the bonny boy
Came thro the wood him lane.'²
- 27 He gae the first to the proud porter,
And he opend an let him in;
He gae the next to the butler-boy,
And he has shown him ben;
- 28 He gae the third to the minstrel
That playd before the king; 110
And he playd success to the bonny boy
Came thro the wood him lane.
- 29 Now when he came before the king,
Fell low down on his knee;
The king he turned round about,
And the saut tear blinded his ee.
- 30 'Win³ up, win up, my bonny boy,
Gang frae my companie;
Ye look sae like my dear daughter,
My heart will birst in three.' 120
- 31 'If I look like your dear daughter,
A wonder it is none;
If I look like your dear daughter,
I am her eldest son.'
- 32 'Will ye tell me, ye little wee boy,
Where may my Margaret be?'
'She's just now standing at your yates,
And my six brithers her wi.'
- 33 'O where are all my porter-boys
That I pay meat and fee, 130
To open my yates baith wide and braid?
Let her come in to me.'
- 34 When she came in before the king,
Fell low down on her knee;
'Win up, win up, my daughter dear,
This day ye'll dine wi me.'
- 35 'Ae bit I canno eat, father,
Nor ae drop can I drink,
Till I see my mither and sister dear,
For lang for them I think.' 140
- 36 When she came before the queen,
Fell low down on her knee;
'Win up, win up, my daughter dear,
This day ye'se dine wi me.'
- 37 'Ae bit I canno eat, mither,
Nor ae drop can I drink,
Until I see my dear sister,
For lang for her I think.'
- 38 When that these two sisters met,
She haid her courteouslie; 150
'Come ben, come ben, my sister dear,
This day ye'se dine wi me.'
- 39 'Ae bit I canno eat, sister,
Nor ae drop can I drink,
Until I see my dear husband,
For lang for him I think.'
- 40 'O where are all my rangers bold
That I pay meat and fee,
To search the forest far an wide,
And bring Akin to me?' 160
- 41 Out it speaks the little wee boy:
'Na, na, this maunna⁴ be;
Without ye grant a free pardon,
I hope ye'll nae him see.'
- 42 'O here I grant a free pardon,
Well seald by my own han;
Ye may make search for Young Akin,
As soon as ever you can.'
- 43 They searchd the country wide and braid,
The forests far and near, 170
And found him into Elmond's wood,
Tearing his yellow hair.
- 44 'Win up, win up now, Young Akin,
Win up, and boun⁵ wi me;
We're messengers come from the court,
The king wants you to see.'
- 45 'O lat him take frae me my head,
Or hang me on a tree;
For since I've lost my dear lady,
Life's no pleasure to me.' 180

¹ in.² alone.³ Get.⁴ must not.⁵ go.

- 46 'Your head will nae be touchd, Akin,
Nor hangd upon a tree;
Your lady's in her father's court,
And all he wants is thee.'
- 47 When he came in before the king,
Fell low down on his knee;
'Win up, win up now, Young Akin,
This day ye 'se dine wi me.'
- 48 But as they werē at dinner set,
The boy asked a boun: 190
'I wish we were in the good church,
For to get christendoun.
- 49 'We hae lived in guid green wood
This seven years and ane;
But a' this time, since eer I mind,
Was never a church within.'
- 50 'Your asking's nae sae great, my
boy,
But granted it shall be;
This day to guid church ye shall gang,
And your mither shall gang you wi.'
- 51 When unto the guid church she came,
She at the door did stan; 202
She was sae sair sunk down wi shame,
She coudna come farer ben.
- 52 Then out it speaks the parish priest,
And a sweet smile gae he:
'Come ben, come ben, my lily flower,
Present your babes to me.'
- 53 Charles, Vincent, Sam and Dick,
And likewise James and John; 210
They calld the eldest Young Akin,
Which was his father's name.
- 54 Then they staid in the royal court,
And livd wi mirth and glee,
And when her father was deceasd,
Heir of the crown was she.
- 2 'O hearken weel now, my good lord,
O hearken weel to what I say;
When ye gang to the wall o Stream,
O gang nae neer the well-fared may.'
- 3 'O haud your tongue, my gay ladie,
Tak nae sic care o me;
For I nae saw a fair woman
I like so well as thee.'
- 4 He mounted on his berry-brown steed,
And merry, merry rade he on,
Till he came to the wall o Stream,
And there he saw the mermaiden.
- 5 'Ye wash, ye wash, ye bonny may,
And ay's ye wash your sark o silk:'
'It's a' for you, ye gentle knight,
My skin is whiter than the milk.' 20
- 6 He's taen her by the milk-white hand,
He's taen her by the sleeve sae
green,
And he's forgotten his gay ladie,
And away with the fair maiden.
.
- 7 'Ohon, alas!' says Clark Colven,
'And aye sae sair's I mean my head!'
And merrily leugh² the mermaiden,
'O win on till you be dead.
- 8 'But out ye tak your little pen-knife,
And frae my sark ye shear a gare;⁴
Row⁶ that about your lovely head, 31
And the pain ye'll never feel nae
mair.'
- 9 Out he has taen his little pen-knife,
And frae her sark he's shorn a gare,
Rowed that about his lovely head,
But the pain increased mair and
mair.
- 10 'Ohon, alas!' says Clark Colven,
'An aye sae sair's I mean my head!'
And merrily laughd the mermaiden,
'It will ay be war⁶ till ye be dead.' 40

CLERK COLVILL

- 1 CLARK COLVEN and his gay ladie,
As they walked to yon garden green,
A belt about her middle gimp,¹
Which cost Clark Colven crowns fif-
teen:

¹ slender.

² well-favored maid. ³ laughed. ⁴ gore, strip.
⁵ Roll. ⁶ worse. ⁷ death.

12 He's mounted on his berry-brown steed,
And dowy, dowy rade he home,
And heavily, heavily lighted down
When to his ladie's bower-door he
came.

13 'Oh, mither, mither, mak my bed,
And, gentle ladie, lay me down; 50
Oh, brither, brither, unbend my bow,
'T will never be bent by me again.'

14 His mither she has made his bed,
His gentle ladie laid him down,
His brither he has unbent his bow,
'T was never bent by him again.

KING JOHN AND THE BISHOP¹

1 Off an ancient story Ile tell you anon,
Of a notable prince *that* was called King
Iohn,
In England was borne, with maine and
with might;
Hee did much wrong and mainteined
litle right.

2 This noble prince was vexed in veretye,
For he was angry with the Bishopp of
Canterbury;
Ffor his house-keeping and his good
cheere,
The² rode post for him, as you shall
heare.

3 They rode post for him verry hastilye;
The *king* sayd the bishopp kept a better
house then hee: 10
A hundred men even, as I [have heard]
say,
The bishopp kept in his house everye
day,
And fifty gold chaines, without any
doubt,
In velvett coates waited the bishopp
about.

4 The bishopp, he came to the court anon,
Before his prince *that* was called King
Iohn.
As soone as the bishopp the *king* did see,
'O,' quoth the *king*, 'bishopp, thow art
welcome to mee.

There is noe man soe welcome to towne
As thou *that* workes treason against my
crowne.' 20

5 'My leege,' quoth the bishopp, 'I wold
it were knowne
I spend, your grace, nothing but *that*
that's my owne;
I trust your grace will doe me noe
deare³
For spending my owne trew gotten
geere.

6 'Yes,' quoth the *king*, 'bishopp, thou
must needs dye,
Eccept thou can answere mee questions
three;
Thy head shalbe smitten quite from thy
bodye,
And all thy living remayne unto mee.

7 'First,' quoth the *king*, 'tell me in this
steade,
With this crowne of gold heere vpon
my head, 30
Amongst my nobilitye, with ioy and
much mirth,
Lett me know within one pennye what
I am worth.

8 'Secondlye, tell me without any dowbt.
How soone I may goe the whole world
about;
And thirdly, tell mee or ever I stinte,
What is the thing, bishopp, *that* I doe
thinke.
Twenty dayes pardon thoust⁴ have
trulye,
And come againe and answere mee.'

9 The bishopp bade the *king* god night att
a word;
He rode betwixt Cambridge and Oxen-
ford, 40
But never a doctor there was soe wise
Cold shew him these questions or enter-
prise.

10 Wherewith the bishopp was nothing
gladd,
But in his hart was heavy and sadd,
And hyed him home to a house in the
countrie,
To ease some part of his melanchollye.

¹ This story appears to be of Oriental origin, and there
are many versions of it East and West.

² They.

³ harm.

⁴ thou shalt.

- 11 His halfe-brother dwelt there, was feirce
and fell,
Noe better but a shepard to the bish-
oppe himsell;
The shepard came to the bishopp anon,
Saying, 'My Lord, you are welcome
home!' 50
- 12 'What ayles you,' quoth the shepard,
'that you are soe sadd,
And had wonte to have beene soe merry
and gladd?'
'Nothing,' quoth the bishopp, 'I ayle
att this time;
Will not thee availle to know, brother
mine.'
- 13 'Brother,' quoth the shepard, 'you
have heard itt,
That a ffoole may teach a wisemane witt;
Say me therfore whatsoever you will,
And if I doe you noe good, Ile doe you
noe ill.'
- 14 Quoth the bishop: 'I have beene att the
court anon,
Before my prince is called *King Iohn*, 60
And there he hath charged mee
Against his crowne with traitorye.
- 15 'If I cannott answer his misterye,
Three questions hee hath propounded to
mee,
He will have my land soe faire and free,
And alsoe the head from my bodye.
- 16 'The first question was, to tell him in
that stead,
With the crowne of gold vpon his head,
Amongst his nobilitye, with ioy and
much mirth,
To lett him know within one peny
what hee is worth. 70
- 17 'And secondlye, to tell him with-out any
doubt
How soone he may goe the whole world
about;
And thirdlye, to tell him, or ere I stint,
What is the thinge *that* he does thinke.'
- 18 'Brother,' quoth the shepard, 'you are
a man of learninge;
What neede you stand in doubt of soe
small a thinge?
- Lend me,' quoth the shepard, 'your
ministers apparrell,
Ile ryde to the court and answeere your
quarrell.
- 19 'Lend me your serving men, say me
not nay,
With all your best horssees *that* ryd on
the way; 80
Ile to the court, this matter to stay;
Ile speake with *King Iohn* and heere
what heele say.'
- 20 The bishopp with speed prepared then
To sett forth the shepard with horsse
and man;
The shepard was lively without any
doubt;
I wott a royall companye came to the
court.
- 21 The shepard hee came to the court anon
Before [his] prince *that* was called
King Iohn.
As soone as the *king* the shepard did
see.
'O,' quoth the king, 'bishopp, thou art
welcome to me.' 90
The shepard was soe like the bishopp
his brother,
The *king* cold not know the one from
the other.
- 22 Quoth the king, 'Bishopp, thou art wel-
come to me
If thou can answer me my questions
three.'
Said the shepard, 'If it please your
grace,
Show mee what the first quest[i]on
was.'
- 23 'First,' quoth the king, 'tell mee in this
stead,
With the crowne of gold vpon my head,
Amongst my nobilitye, with ioy and
much mirth,
Within one pennye what I am worth.' 100
- 24 Quoth the shepard. 'To make your grace
noe offence,
I thinke you are worth nine and twenty
pence;
For our Lord Iesus, *that* bought vs all,
For thirty pence was sold into thrall

37 Whereever wist you shepard before,
That had in his head witt such store
 To pleasure a bishopp in such a like case,
 To answer three questions to the kings
 grace ? 160

Whereever wist you shepard gett cleare
 Three hundred and fifty pound a yeere ?

38 I never hard of his fellow before,
 Nor I never shall ; now I need to say
 noe more.

I never knew shepard *that* gott such a
 livinge

But David, the shepard, *that* was a king.

YOUNG BICHAM¹

1 IN London city was Bicham born,
 He longd strange countries for to see,
 But he was taen by a savage Moor,
 Who handld him right cruely.

2 For thro his shoulder he put a bore,²
 An thro the bore has pitten a tree,³
 An he's gard⁴ him draw the carts o wine,
 Where horse and oxen had wont to be.

3 He's casten [him] in a dungeon deep, ⁹
 Where he coud neither hear nor see;
 He's shut him up in a prison strong,
 And he's handld him right cruely.

4 O this Moor he had but ae daughter,
 I wot her name was Shusy Pye;
 She's doen her to the prison-house,
 And she's calld Young Bicham one
 word by.

5 'O hae ye ony lands or rents,
 Or citys in your ain country,
 Coud free you out of prison strong,
 An coud mantain a lady free?' 20

6 'O London city is my own,
 An other citys twa or three
 Coud loose me out o prison strong,
 An coud mantain a lady free.'

7 O she has bribed her father's men
 Wi meikle goud⁵ and white money,
 She's gotten the key o the prison doors,
 An she has set Young Bicham free.

8 She's gi'n him a loaf o good white bread,
 But an a flask o Spanish wine, 30
 An she bad him mind on the ladie's love
 That sae kindly freed him out o pine.

9 'Go set your foot on good ship-board,
 An haste you back to your ain coun-
 try,
 An before that seven years has an end,
 Come back again, love, and marry
 me.'

10 It was long or seven years had an end
 She longd fu sair her love to see;
 She's set her foot on good ship-board,
 An turnd her back on her ain coun-
 try. 40

11 She's saild up, so has she down,
 Till she came to the other side;
 She's landed at Young Bicham's gates,
 An I hop this day she sal be his bride.

12 'Is this Young Bicham's gates?' says
 she,
 'Or is that noble prince within?'
 'He's up the stairs wi his bonny bride,
 An monny a lord and lady wi him.'

13 'O has he taen a bonny bride,
 An has he clean forgotten me!' 50
 An sighing said that gay lady,
 'I wish I were in my ain country!'

14 But she's pitten her han in her pocket,
 An gin⁶ the porter guineas three;
 Says, 'Take ye that, ye proud porter,
 An bid the bridegroom speak to me.'

15 O whan the porter came up the stair,
 He's fa'n low down upon his knee:
 'Won' up, won up, ye proud porter,
 An what makes a' this courtesy?' 60

16 'O I've been porter at your gates
 This mair nor seven years an three,
 But there is a lady at them now
 The like of whom I never did see.

17 'For on every finger she has a ring,
 An on the mid-finger she has three,
 An there's as meikle goud⁸ aboon her
 brow
 As woud buy an earldome o lan to me.'

¹ Lord Bateman is a later version of this popular theme.
² hole. ³ put a stick. ⁴ compelled. ⁵ much gold.

⁶ given. ⁷ Get. ⁸ much gold.

18 Then up it started Young Bicham,
An sware so loud by Our Lady, 70
'It can be nane but Shushy Pye,
That has come oer the sea to me.'

19 O quickly ran he down the stair,
O' fifteen steps he has made but
three;
He's tane his bonny love in his arms,
An a wot he kissd her tenderly.

20 'O hae you taen a bonny bride?
An hae you quite forsaken me?
An hae ye quite forgotten her
That gae you life an liberty?' 80

21 She's lookit oer her left shoulder
To hide the tears stood in her ee;
'Now fare thee well, Young Bicham,'
she says,
'I'll strive to think nae mair on
thee.'

22 'Take back your daughter, madam,' he
says,
'An a double dowry I'll gi her wi;
For I maun marry my first true love,
That's done and suffered so much for
me.'

23 He's take his bonny love by the han,
And led her to yon fountain stane; 90
He's changd her name frae Shusy Pye,
An he's cald her his bonny love,
Lady Jane.

THE CHERRY-TREE CAROL¹

1 JOSEPH was an old man,
and an old man was he,
When he wedded Mary,
in the land of Galilee.

2 Joseph and Mary walked
through an orchard good,
Where was cherries and berries,
so red as any blood.

3 Joseph and Mary walked
through an orchard green, 10
Where was berries and cherries,
as thick as might be seen.

4 O then bespoke Mary,
so meek and so mild:
'Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,
for I am with child.'

5 O then bespoke Joseph,
with words most unkind:
'Let him pluck thee a cherry
that brought thee with child.' 20

6 O then bespoke the babe,
withiu his mother's womb:
'Bow down then the tallest tree,
for my mother to have some.'

7 Then bowed down the highest tree
unto his mother's hand;
Then she cried, 'See, Joseph,
I have cherries at command.'

8 O then bespake Joseph:
'I have done Mary wrong; 30
But cheer up, my dearest,
and be not cast down.'

9 Then Mary plucked a cherry,
as red as the blood,
Then Mary went home
with her heavy load.

10 Then Mary took her babe,
and sat him on her knee,
Saying, 'My dear son, tell me
what this world will be.' 40

11 'O I shall be as dead, mother,
as the stones in the wall;
O the stones in the streets, mother,
shall mourn for me all.

12 'Upon Easter-day, mother,
my uprising shall be;
O the sun and the moon, mother,
shall both rise with me.'

SIR PATRICK SPENCE²

1 THE king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
'O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?'

¹ This story is founded on the gospel of the *Pseudo-Matthew*, xx.

² One of the best ballads, historical sounding, but not historical in any strict sense.

- 2 Up and spak an eldern knight,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se.'
- 3 The king has written a braid¹ letter,
And signd it wi his hand, 10
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.
- 4 The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch² lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.
- 5 'O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the
yeir, 20
To sail upon the se!
- 6 'Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men
all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:'
'O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.
- 7 'Late late yestreen I saw the new
moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme.'
- 8 O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone; 30
Bot lang owre³ a' the play wer
playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.⁴
- 9 O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.
- 10 O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems⁵ in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair. 40
- 11 Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

¹ broad. ² laugh. ³ before.
⁴ above. ⁵ combs.

KING ESTMERE⁶

- 1 HEARKEN to me, gentlemen,
Come and you shall heare;
He tell you of two of the boldest bre-
ther
That ever borne were.
- 2 The tone of them was Adler Younge,
The tother was Kyng Estmere;
The were as bolde men in their deeds
As any were, farr and neare.
- 3 As they were drinking ale and wine
Within his brother's hall, 10
'When will ye marry a wyfe, brother,
A wyfe to glad us all?'
- 4 Then bespake him Kyng Estmere,
And answered him hartilye:
'I know not that ladye in any land,
That's able to marrye with mee.'
- 5 'Kyng Adland hath a daughter, brother,
Men call her bright and sheene;
If I were kyng here in your stead,
That ladye shold be my queene.' 20
- 6 Saies, 'Reade⁷ me, reade me, deare bro-
ther,
Throughout merry England,
Where we might find a messenger
Betwixt us towe to sende.'
- 7 Saies, 'You shal ryde yourselfe, brother,
He beare you companye;
Many a man throughe fals messengers
is deceived,
And I feare lest soe shold wee.'
- 8 Thus the renisht⁸ them to ryde,
Of two good renisht steeds, 30
And when the came to King Adlands
halle,
Of redd gold shone their weeds.
- 9 And when the came to Kyng Adlands
hall,
Before the goodlye gate,
There they found good Kyng Adland
Rearing himselfe theratt.

⁶ We possess this spirited ballad, unfortunately, only as touched up by Bishop Percy. Adler and Estmere occur again in the *Percy Folio MS.*, ed. Hales and Furnivall, II, 296, and there Adler gets a fine wife.

⁷ Advise.

⁸ they prepared.

- 10 'Now Christ thee save, good Kyng
Adland;
Now Christ you save and see:'
Sayd, 'You be welcome, King Estmere,
Right hartilye to mee.' 40
- 11 'You have a daughter,' said Adler
Younge,
'Men call her bright and sheene;
My brother wold marrye her to his wiffe,
Of Englande to be queene.'
- 12 'Yesterday was att my deere daughter
The king his sonne of Spayn,
And then she nicked him of naye,¹
And I doubt sheele do you the same.'
- 13 'The kyng of Spayne is a foule paynim,
And 'leeveth on Mahound,² 50
And pitye it were that fayre ladye
Shold marry a heathen hound.'
- 14 'But grant to me,' sayes Kyng Estmere,
'For my love I you praye,
That I may see your daughter deere
Before I goe hence awaye.'
- 15 'Although itt is seven yeers and more
Since my daughter was in halle,
She shall come once downe for your sake,
To glad my guestës alle.' 60
- 16 Downe then came that mayden fayre,
With ladyes laced in pall,
And halfe a hundred of bold knightes,
To bring her [from] bowre to hall,
And as many gentle squiers,
To tend upon them all.
- 17 The talents of golde were on her head
sette
Hanged low downe to her knee,
And every ring on her small finger
Shone of the chrystall free. 70
- 18 Saies, 'God you save, my deere madam,'
Saies, 'God you save and see:'
Said, 'You be welcome, Kyng Estmere,
Right welcome unto mee.'
- 19 'And, if you love me, as you saye,
Soe well and hartilee,
All that ever you are comen about
Soone sped now itt shal bee.'
- 20 Then bespake her father deare:
'My daughter, I saye naye; 80
Remember well the kyng of Spayne,
What he sayd yesterdaye.'
- 21 'He wold pull downe my halles and castles,
And reave me of my lyfe;
I cannot blame him if he doe,
If I reave him of his wyfe.'
- 22 'Your castles and your towres, father,
Are stronglye built aboute,
And therefore of the king his sonne of
Spaine
Wee neede not stande in doubt. 90
- 23 'Plight me your troth, nowwe, Kyng
Estmere,
By heaven and your righte hand,
That you will marrye me to your wife,
And make me queene of your land.'
- 24 Then Kyng Estmere he plight his troth,
By heaven and his righte hand,
That he wolde marrye her to his wyfe,
And make her queene of his land.
- 25 And he tooke leave of that ladye fayre,
To goe to his owne countree, 100
To fetehe him dukes and lordes and
knightes,
That married the might bee.
- 26 They had not ridden scant a myle,
A myle forthe of the towne,
But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With kempës³ many one.
- 27 But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With manye a bold barone,
Tone day to marrye Kyng Adlands
daughter,
Tother daye to carrye her home. 110
- 28 Shee sent one after Kyng Estmere,
In all the spede might bee,
That he must either turne againe and
fichte,
Or goe home and loose his ladye.
- 29 One whyle then the page he went,
Another while he ranne;
Till he had oretaken King Estmere,
I-wis he never blanne.⁴

¹ said him naye.² Mahomet.³ champions.⁴ stopped.

30 'Tydings, tydings, Kyng Estmere!'
 'What tydings now, my boye?' 120
 'O tydings I can tell to you,
 That will you sore annoye.

31 'You had not ridden scant a mile,
 A mile out of the towne,
 But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
 With kempes many a one.

32 'But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
 With manye a bold barone,
 Tone daye to marrye King Adlands
 daughter,
 Tother daye to carry her home. 130

33 'My ladye fayre she greetes you well,
 And ever-more well by mee;
 You must either turne againe and fighte,
 Or goe home and loose your ladye.'

34 Saies, 'Reade me, reade me, deere brother,
 My reade shall ryse at thee,¹
 Whether it is better to turne and fighte,
 Or goe home and loose my ladye.'

35 'Now hearkentome,' sayes Adler Yonge,
 'And your reade must rise at me; 140
 I quickly will devise a waye
 To sette thy ladye free.

36 'My mother was a westerne woman,
 And learned in gramarye,²
 And when I learned at the schole,
 Something shee taught itt mee.

37 'There growes an hearbe within this field,
 And iff it were but knowne,
 His color, which is whyte and redd,
 It will make blacke and browne. 150

38 'His color, which is browne and blacke,
 Itt will make redd and whyte;
 That sworde is not in all Englande
 Upon his coate will byte.

39 'And you shal be a harper, brother,
 Out of the north countrye,
 And Ile be your boy, soe faine of fighte,
 And beare your harpe by your knee.

40 'And you shal be the best harper
 That ever tooke harpe in hand, 160

¹ My counsel shall come from you. ² magic.

And I will be the best singer
 That ever sung in this lande.

41 'Itt shal be written in our forheads,
 All and in grammarye,
 That we towe are the boldest men
 That are in all Christentye.'

42 And thus they renisht them to ryde,
 Of tow good renisht steedes,
 And when they came to King Adlands
 hall,
 Of redd gold shone their weedes. 170

43 And whan the came to Kyng Adlands hall
 Untill the fayre hall-yate,
 There they found a proud porter,
 Rearing himselfe thereatt.

44 Sayes, 'Christ thee save, thou proud
 porter,'
 Sayes, 'Christ thee save and see:'
 'Nowe you be welcome,' sayd the porter,
 'Of what land soever ye bee.'

45 'Wee beene harpers,' sayd Adler Younge,
 'Come out of the northe countrye; 180
 Wee beene come hither untill this place
 This proud weddinge for to see.'

46 Sayd, 'And your color were white and
 redd,
 As it is blacke and browne,
 I wold saye King Estmere and his brother
 Were comen untill this towne.'

47 Then they pulled out a ryng of gold,
 Layd itt on the porters arme:
 'And³ ever we will thee,⁴ proud porter,
 Thou wilt saye us no harme.' 190

48 Sore he looked on Kyng Estmere,
 And sore he handled the ryng,
 Then opened to them the fayre hall-yates,
 He lett⁵ for no kind of thyng.

49 Kyng Estmere he stabled his steede
 Soe fayre att the hall-bord;
 The froth that came from his brydle bitte
 Light in Kyng Bremors beard.

50 Saies, 'Stable thy steed, thou proud
 harper,'
 Saies, 'Stable him in the stalle; 200

I f. ⁴ thrive. ⁵ delayed.

- It doth not beseeme a proud harper
To stable his steede in a kyngs halle.'
- 51 'My ladde he is so lither,'¹ he said;
'He will doe nought that's meete;
And is there any man in this hall
Were able him to beate?'
- 52 'Thou speakst proud words,' sayes the
king of Spaine,
'Thou harper, here to mee;
There is a man within this halle
Will beate thy ladd and thee.' 210
- 53 'O let that man come downe,' he said,
'A sight of him wold I see;
And when hee hath beaten well my ladd,
Then he shall beate of mee.'
- 54 Downe then came the kemperye² man,
And looked him in the eare;
For all the gold that was under heaven,
He durst not neigh³ him neare.
- 55 'And how nowe, kempe,' said the kyng
of Spaine,
'And how, what aileth thee?' 220
He saies, 'It is writt in his forehead,
All and in gramarye,
That for all the gold that is under heaven,
I dare not neigh him nye.'
- 56 Then Kyng Estmere pulld forth his
harpe,
And plaid a pretty thinge;
The ladye upstart from the borde,
And wold have gone from the king.
- 57 'Stay thy harpe, thou proud harper,
For Gods love I pray thee; 230
For and thou playes as thou beginns,
Thou'lt till⁴ my bryde from mee.'
- 58 He stroake upon his harpe againe,
And playd a pretty thinge;
The ladye lough a loud laughter,
As shee sate by the king.
- 59 Saies, 'Sell me thy harpe, thou proud
harper,
And thy stringes all;
For as many gold nobles thou shalt have,
As heere bee ringes in the hall.' 240
- 60 'What wold ye doe with my harpe,' he
sayd,
'If I did sell itt yee?'
'To playe my wiffe and me a fitt,
When abed together wee bee.'
- 61 'Now sell me,' quoth hee, 'thy bryde
soe gay,
As shee sits by thy knee;
And as many gold nobles I will give
As leaves been on a tree.'
- 62 'And what wold ye doe with my bryde
soe gay,
Iff I did sell her thee? 250
More seemelye it is for her fayre bodye
To lye by mee then thee.'
- 63 Hee played agayne both loud and shrille,
And Adler he did syng,
'O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
Noe harper, but a kyng.
- 64 'O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
As playnlye thou mayest see,
And Ile rid thee of that foul paynim
Who partes thy love and thee.' 260
- 65 The ladye looked, the ladye blushte,
And blushte and lookt agayne,
While Adler he hath drawne his brande,
And hath the sowdan slayne.
- 66 Up then rose the kemperye men,
And loud they gan to crye:
'Ah! traytors, yee have slayne our kyng,
And therefore yee shall dye.'
- 67 Kyng Estmere threwe the harpe asyde,
And swith⁵ he drew his brand, 270
And Estmere he and Adler Yonge
Right stiffe in stour⁶ can stand.
- 68 And aye their swordes soe sore can hyte,
Throughe help of gramarye,
That soone they have slayne the kem-
perye men,
Or forst them forth to flee.
- 69 Kyng Eastmere tooke that fayre ladye,
And marryed her to his wiffe,
And brought her home to mery Eng-
land,
With her to lead his life. 280
5 quickly. 6 bold in battle.

¹ rascally.⁵ nigh, approach.² fighting.⁴ toll, entice.

FAIR ANNIE¹

- 1 'It's narrow, narrow, make your bed,
And learn to lie your lane;²
For I'm ga'n oer the sea, Fair Annie,
A braw bride to bring hame.
Wi her I will get gowd and gear;
Wi you I neer got nane.
- 2 'But wha will bake my bridal bread,
Or brew my bridal ale?
And wha will welcome my brisk bride,
That I bring oer the dale?' 10
- 3 'It's I will bake your bridal bread,
And brew your bridal ale,
And I will welcome your brisk bride,
That you bring oer the dale.'
- 4 'But she that welcomes my brisk bride
Maun gang like maiden fair;
She maun lace on her robe sae jimp,³
And braid her yellow hair.'
- 5 'But how can I gang maiden-like,
When maiden I am nane? 20
Have I not born seven sons to thee,
And am with child again?'
- 6 She's taen her young son in her arms,
Another in her hand,
And she's up to the highest tower,
To see him come to land.
- 7 'Come up, come up, my eldest son,
And look oer yon sea-strand,
And see your father's new-come bride,
Before she come to land.' 30
- 8 'Comedown, comedown, my mother dear,
Come frae the castle wa!
I fear, if langer ye stand there,
Ye'll let yoursell down fa.'
- 9 And she gaed down, and farther down,
Her love's ship for to see,
And the topmast and the mainmast
Shone like the silver free.
- 10 And she's gane down, and farther down,
The bride's ship to behold, 40

¹ The twelfth century *Lai le Fraime* (*Lay of the Ash-Tree*) of Marie de France is a version of this ancient tale: it may be found translated in Eugene Mason's *French Mediæval Romances*, in *Everyman's Library*.

² alone.

³ close-fitting.

- And the topmast and the mainmast
They shone just like the gold.
- 11 She's taen her seven sons in her hand,
I wot she didna fail;
She met Lord Thomas and his bride,
As they came oer the dale.
- 12 'You're welcome to your house, Lord
Thomas,
You're welcome to your land;
You're welcome with your fair ladye,
That you lead by the hand. 50
- 13 'You're welcome to your ha's, ladye,
You're welcome to your bowers;
You're welcome to your hame, ladye,
For a' that's here is yours.'
- 14 'I thank thee, Annie; I thank thee,
Annie,
Sae dearly as I thank thee;
You're the likest to my sister Annie,
That ever I did see.
- 15 'There came a knight out oer the sea,
And steald my sister away; 60
The shame scoup⁴ in his company,
And land whereer he gae!'
- 16 She hang ae napkin at the door,
Another in the ha,
And a' to wipe the trickling tears,
Sae fast as they did fa.
- 17 And aye she served the lang tables,
With white bread and with wine,
And aye she drank the wan water,
To had⁵ her colour fine. 70
- 18 And aye she served the lang tables,
With white bread and with brown;
And ay she turned her round about,
Sae fast the tears fall down.
- 19 And he's taen down the silk napkin,
Hung on a silver pin,
And aye he wipes the tear trickling
A' down her cheik and chin.
- 20 And aye he turn'd him round about, 80
And smil'd amang his men;
Says, 'Like ye best the old ladye,
Or her that's new come hame?'

⁴ fly.

⁵ hold, maintain.

- 21 When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
And a' men bound to bed,
Lord Thomas and his new-come bride
To their chamber they were gaed.
- 22 Annie made her bed a little forbye,¹
To hear what they might say;
'And ever alas!' Fair Annie cried,
'That I should see this day!' 90
- 23 'Gin my seven sons were seven young rats,
Running on the castle wa,
And I were a grey cat mysell,
I soon would worry them a'.
- 24 'Gin my seven sons were seven young hares,
Running oer yon lilly lee,
And I were a grew hound² mysell,
Soon worried they a' should be.'
- 25 And wae and sad Fair Annie sat,
And drearie was her sang, 100
And ever, as she sobbd and grat,³
'Wae to the man that did the wrang!'
- 26 'My gown is on,' said the new-come bride,
'My shoes are on my feet,
And I will to Fair Annie's chamber,
And see what gars⁴ her greet.
- 27 'What ails ye, what ails ye, Fair Annie,
That ye make sic a moan?
Has your wine barrels cast the girds,⁵
Or is your white bread gone?' 110
- 28 'O wha was 't was your father, Annie,
Or wha was 't was your mother?
And had ye ony sister, Annie,
Or had ye ony brother?'
- 29 'The Earl of Wemyss was my father,
The Countess of Wemyss my mother;
And a' the folk about the house
To me were sister and brother.'
- 30 'If the Earl of Wemyss was your father,
I wot sae was he mine; 120
And it shall not be for lack o' gowd
That ye your love sall tine.⁶

¹ nearby. ² greyhound. ³ wept.
⁴ makes. ⁵ hoops. ⁶ lose.

- 31 'For I have seven ships o' mine ain,
A' loaded to the brim,
And I will gie them a' to thee,
Wi' four to thine eldest son:
But thanks to a' the powers in heaven
That I gae maiden hame!'

CHILD WATERS

- 1 CHILDE WATTERS in his stable stooede,
And stroaket his milke-white steede;
To him came a ffaire young ladye
As ere did weare womans wee[de].
- 2 Saies, 'Christ you save, good Chyld Watters!'
Sayes, 'Christ you save and see!
My girdle of gold, which was too longe,
Is now to short ffor mee.
- 3 'And all is with one chyld of yours,
I ffeele sturte att my side; 10
My gowne of greene, it is to strayght;⁷
Before it was to wide.'
- 4 'If the child be mine, Faire Ellen,' he sayd,
'Be mine, as you tell mee,
Take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
Take them your owne to bee.
- 5 'If the child be mine, Ffaire Ellen,' he said,
'Be mine, as you doe sweare,
Take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
And make that child your heyre.' 20
- 6 Shee saies, 'I had rather have one kisse,
Child Waters, of thy mouth,
Then I wold have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
That lyes by north and south.
- 7 'And I had rather have a twinkling,
Child Waters, of your eye,
Then I wold have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
To take them mine oun to bee.
- 8 'To-morrow, Ellen, I must forth ryde
Soe farr into the north cuntrye; 30
The ffairest lady that I can ffind,
Ellen, must goe with mee.'

⁷ narrow.

- 'And ever I pray you, Child Watters,
Your footpage let me bee !'
- 9 'If you will my footpage be, Ellen,
As you doe tell itt mee,
Then you must cutt your gownne of
greene
An inche above your knee.
- 10 'Soe must you doe your yellow lockes,
Another inch above your eye; 40
You must tell nōe man what is my
name;
My footpage then you shall bee.'
- 11 All this long day Child Waters rode,
Shee ran bare foothe by his side;
Yett was he never soe curteous a knight
To say, 'Ellen, will you ryde ?'
- 12 But all this day Child Waters rode,
Shee ran barfoothe thorow the broome;
Yett he was never soe curteous a knight
As to say, 'Put on your shoone.' 50
- 13 'Ride softlye,' shee said, 'Child Waters;
Why doe you ryde soe ffast ?
The child which is no mans but yours
My bodye itt will burst.'
- 14 He sayes, 'Sees thou yonder water,
Ellen,
That fflowes from banke to brim ?'
'I trust to God, Child Waters,' shee
said,
'You will never see mee swime.'
- 15 But when shee came to the waters side,
Shee sayled to the chinne: 60
'Except the lord of heaven be my speed,
Now must I learne to swime.'
- 16 The salt waters bare vp Ellens clothes,
Our Ladye bare vp be[r] chinne,
And Child Waters was a woe man,
good Lord,
To ssee Faire Ellen swime.
- 17 And when shee over the water was,
Shee then came to his knee:
He said, 'Come hither, Ffaire Ellen,
Loe yonder what I see !' 70
- 18 'Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen ?
Of redd gold shine the yates ;
- There's four and twenty ffayre ladyes,
The ffairest is my wordlye make.¹
- 19 'Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen ?
Of redd gold shineth the tower ;
There is four and twenty ffaire ladyes,
The fairest is my paramoure.'
- 20 'I doe see the hall now, Child Waters,
That of redd gold shineth the yates ;
God give good then of your selfe, 81
And of your wordlye make !
- 21 'I doe see the hall now, Child Waters,
That of redd gold shineth the tower ;
God give good then of your selfe,
And of your paramoure !'
- 22 There were four and twenty ladyes,
Were playing att the ball,
And Ellen, was the ffairest ladye,
Must bring his steed to the stall. 90
- 23 There were four and twenty faire ladyes
Was playing att the chesse ;
And Ellen, shee was the ffairest ladye,
Must bring his horsse to grasse.
- 24 And then bespake Child Waters sister,
And these were the words said shee :
You have the prettyest footpage, bro-
ther,
That ever I saw with mine eye ;
- 25 'But that his belly it is soe bigg,
His girdle goes wonderous hye ; 100
And euer I pray you, Child Waters,
Let him goe into the chamber with
mee.'
- 26 'It is more meete for a little foot-
page,
That has run through mosse and mire,
To take his supper vpon his knee
And sitt downe by the kitchin fyre,
Then to goe into the chamber with any
ladye
That weares soe [rich] attyre.'
- 27 But when they had supped euery one,
To bedd they took the way ; 110
He said, 'Come hither, my little foot-
page,
Hearken what I doe say.
1 worldly mate.

28 'And goe thee downe into yonder towne,
And low into the street;
The fairest ladye *that* thou can find,
Hyer her in mine armes to sleepe,
And take her up in thine armes two,
For filinge¹ of her feete.'

29 Ellen is gone into the towne,
And low into the streete; 120
The fairest ladye *that* shee cold find
Shee hyred in his armes to sleepe,
And tooke her in her armes two,
For filing of her feete.

30 'I pray you now, good Child Waters,
That I may creepe in att your bedds
feete;
For there is noe place about this house
Where I may say² a sleepe.'

31 This [night] and itt drove on after-
ward
Till itt was neere the day: 130
He sayd, 'Rise vp, my little ffoote-page,
And give my steed corne and hay;
And soe doe thou the good blacke
oates,
That he may carry me the better
away.'

32 And up then rose Ffaire Ellen,
And gave his steed corne and hay,
And soe shee did and the good blacke
oates,
That he might carry him the better
away.

33 Shee layned³ her backe to the manger
side,
And greivouslye did groane; 140
And *that* beheard his mother deere,
And heard her make her moane.

34 Shee said, 'Rise vp, thou Child Waters,
I thinke thou art a cursed man;
For yonder is a ghost in thy stable,
That greivouslye doth groane,
Or else some woman laboures of child,
Shee is soe woe begone.'

35 But vp then rose Child Waters,
And did on his shirt of silke; 150
Then he put on his other clothes
On his body as white as milke.

¹ defiling. ² assay. ³ leaned.

36 And when he came to the stable-dore,
Full still *that* hee did stand,
That hee might heare now Faire Ellen,
How shee made her monand.⁴

37 Sheesaid, 'Lullabye, my owne deere child!
Lullabye, deere child, deere!
I wold thy father were a king,
Thy mother layd on a beere!' 160

38 'Peace now,' he said, 'good Faire Ellen,
And be of good cheere, I thee pray,
And the bridall and the churching both,
They shall bee upon one day.'

LADY MAISRY

1 THE young lords o the north country
Have all a wooing gone,
To win the love of Lady Maisry,
But o them she woud hae none.

2 O they hae courted Lady Maisry
Wi a' kin kind of things;⁵
An they hae sought her Lady Maisry
Wi brotches an wi rings.

3 An they ha sought her Lady Maisry
Frae father and frae mother; 10
An they ha sought her Lady Maisry
Frae sister an frae brother.

4 An they ha followd her Lady Maisry
Thro chamber and thro ha;
But a' that they coud say to her,
Her answer still was Na.

5 'O had⁶ your tongues, young men,' she
says,
'An think nae mair o me;
For I've gien my love to an English lord,
An think nae mair o me.' 20

6 Her father's kitchy-boy heard that,
An ill death may he dee!
An he is on to her brother,
As fast as gang coud he.

7 'O is my father an my mother well,
But an my brothers three?
Gin my sister Lady Maisry be well,
There's naething can ail me.'

⁴ moaning.

⁵ things of every conceivable kind.

⁶ hold.

- 8 'Your father and your mother is well,
But an your brothers three; 30
Your sister Lady Maisry's well,
So big wi bairn gangs she.'
- 9 'Gin this be true you tell to me,
My mailison¹ light on thee!
But gin it be a lie you tell,
You sal be hangit hie.'
- 10 He's done him to his sister's bowr,
Wi meikle doole an care;
An there he saw her Lady Maisry,
Kembing her yallow hair. 40
- 11 'O wha is aught² that bairn,' he says,
'That ye sae big are wi?
And gin ye winna own the truth,
This moment ye sall dee.'
- 12 She turnd her right an roun about,
An the kem fell frae her han;
A trembling seizd her fair body,
An her rosy cheek grew wan.
- 13 'O pardon me, my brother dear,
An the truth I'll tell to thee; 50
My bairn it is to Lord William,
An he is betrothed to me.'
- 14 'O coud na ye gotten dukes, or lords,
Intill your ain country,
That ye draw up wi an English dog,
To bring this shame on me?
- 15 'But ye maun gi up the English lord,
Whan youre young babe is born;
For, gin you keep by him an hour langer,
Your life sall be forlorn.' 60
- 16 'I will gi up this English blood,
Till my young babe be born;
But the never a day nor hour langer,
Tho my life should be forlorn.'
- 17 'O whare is a' my merry young men,
Whom I gi meat and fee,
To pu the thistle and the thorn,
To burn this wile³ whore wi?' 70
- 18 'O whare will I get a bonny boy,
To help me in my need,
To rin wi hast to Lord William,
And bid him come wi speed?'
- 19 O out it spake a bonny boy,
Stood by her brother's side:
'O I would rin your errand, lady,
Oer a' the world wide.
- 20 'Aft have I run your errands, lady,
Whan blawn baith win and weet;⁴
But now I'll rin your errand, lady,
Wi sat⁵ tears on my cheek.' 80
- 21 O whan he came to broken briggs,⁶
He bent his bow and swam,
An whan he came to the green grass
growin,
He slackd his shoone and ran.
- 22 O whan he came to Lord William's
gates,
He baed na to chap or ca,⁷
But set his bent bow till his breast,
An lightly lap the wa;⁸
An, or the porter was at the gate,
The boy was i the ha. 90
- 23 'O is my biggins⁹ broken, boy?
Or is my towers won?
Or is my lady lighter yet,
Of a dear daughter or son?'
- 24 'Your biggin is na broken, sir,
Nor is your towers won;
But the fairest lady in a' the lan
For you this day maun burn.'
- 25 'O saddle me the black, the black, 100
Or saddle me the brown;
O saddle me the swiftest steed
That ever rade frae a town.'
- 26 Or he was near a mile awa,
She heard his wild horse sneeze:
'Mend up the fire, my false brother,
It's na come to my knees.'
- 27 O whan he lighted at the gate,
She heard his bridle ring:
'Mend up the fire, my false brother,
It's far yet frae my chin. 110
- 28 'Mend up the fire to me, brother,
Mend up the fire to me;
For I see him comin hard an fast
Will soon men't up to thee.

¹ curse.² who is it owns.³ vile.⁴ blowing both wind and wet. ⁵ salt. ⁶ bridges.⁷ bided not to rap or call. ⁸ leaped the wall. ⁹ buildings.

29 'O gin my hands had been loose, Willy,
Sae hard as they are boun,
I would have turnd me frae the glee^d,¹
And castin out your young son.'

30 'O I'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
Your father an your mother; 120
An I'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
Your sister an your brother.

31 'An I'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
The chief of a' your kin;
An the last bonfire that I come to,
Mysel I will cast in.'

GLASGERION²

1 GLASGERION was a kings owne sonne,
And a harper he was good;
He harped in the kings chamber,
Where cuppe and candle stode,
And soe did hee in the queens chamber,
Till ladies waxed wood.³

2 And then bespake the *kings* daughter,
And these words thus sayd shee.

.

3 Saide, 'Strike on, strike on, Glasgerri^{on},
Of thy striking doe not blinne;⁴ 10
There's never a stroke comes over thin
harpe
But it glads my hart within.'

4 'Faire might you fall, lady!' quoth hee;
'Who taught you now to speake.
I have loved you, lady, seven yeere;
My hart I durst neere breake.'

5 'But come to my bower, my Glasger-
ryon,
When all men are att rest;
As I am a ladie true of my promise,
Thou shalt bee a welcome guest.' 20

6 But hom then came Glasgerryon,
A glad man, Lord, was hee:
'And come thou hither, Iacke, my boy,
Come hither unto mee.

7 'For the *kings* daughter of Normandye,
Her love is granted mee,
And beffore the cocke have crowen,
Att her chamber must I bee.'

8 'But come you hither, *master*,' quoth hee,
'Lay your head downe on this stone;
For I will waken you, *master* deere, 31
Afore it be time to gone.'

9 But upp then rose *that* lither ⁵ ladd,
And did on hose and shoone;
A coller he cast upon his necke,
Hee seemed a gentleman.

10 And when he came to *that* ladies cham-
ber,
He thrild vpon a pinn;⁶
The lady was true of her promise,
Rose up and lett him in. 40

11 He did not take the lady gay
To boulster nor to bedd,
But downe upon her chamber-flore
Full soone he bath her layd.

12 He did not kisse *that* lady gay
When he came nor when he youd;⁷
And sore mistrusted *that* lady gay
He was of some churlës blood.

13 But home then came *that* lither ladd,
And did of his hose and shoone, 50
And cast *that* coller from about his
necke;
He was but a churlës sonne:
'Awaken,' quoth hee, 'my *master* deere,
I hold it time to be gone.

14 'For I have sadled your horsse, *master*,
Well bridled I have your steed;
Have not I served a good breakfast,
When time comes I have need.'

15 But up then rose good Glasgerryon,
And did on both hose and shoone, 60
And cast a coller about his necke;
He was a *kingës* sonne.

16 And when he came to *that* ladies cham-
ber,
He thrild vpon a pinn;
The lady was more then true of promise,
Rose up and let him in.

⁵ wicked. ⁶ rattled at the door-fastening. ⁷ went.

¹ brand.

² It is an interesting circumstance that one of the great harpers mentioned by Chaucer in his *House of Fame* (iii, 118) is the "Bret," or British, Glascurion.

³ frantic.

⁴ cease.

17 Saies, 'Whether have you left with me
Your braclett or your glove?
Or are you returned backe againe
To know more of my love?' 70

18 Glasgerryon swore a full great othe,
By oake and ashe and thorne,
'Lady, I was never in your chamber
Sith the time that I was borne.'

19 'O then it was your litle foote-page
Falsly hath beguiled me:
And then shee pulld forth a litle pen-
knife,
That hanged by her knee,
Says, 'There shall never noe churlës
blood
Spring within my body.' 80

20 But home then went Glasgerryon,
A woe man, good [Lord], was hee;
'Sayes, 'Come hither, thou lacke, my
boy,
Come thou hither to me.

21 'Ffor if I had killed a man to-night,
Iacke, I wold tell it thee;
But if I have not killed a man to-night,
Iacke, thou hast killed three!'

22 And he puld out his bright browne
sword,
And dried it on his sleeve, 90
And he smote off that lither ladds head,
And asked noe man noe leave.

23 He sett the swords poynt till his brest,
The pumill till a stone;
Thorrow¹ that falsenese of that lither
ladd
These three lives werne all gone.

CLERK SAUNDERS

1 CLARK SANDERS and May Margret
Walkt ower yon graveld green,
And sad and heavy was the love,
I wat, it fell this twa between.

2 'A bed, a bed,' Clark Sanders said,
'A bed, a bed for you and I,'
'Fye no, fye no,' the lady said,
'Until the day we married be.

¹ Through.

3 'For in it will come my seven brothers,
And a' their torches burning bright; 10
They'll say, "We hae but ae sister,
And here her lying wi a knight."'

4 'Ye'll take the sourde fray my scab-
bord,
And lowly, lowly lift the gin,
And you may say, your oth to save,
You never let Clark Sanders in.

5 'Yele take a napken in your hand,
And ye'll ty up baith your een,
An ye may say, your oth to save,
That ye saw na Sandy sen late yes-
treen. 20

6 'Yele take me in your armes twa,
Yele carrey me ben² into your bed,
And ye may say, your oth to save,
In your bower-floor I never tread.'

7 She has taen the sourde fray his scab-
bord,
And lowly, lowly lifted the gin;
She was to swear, her oth to save,
She never let Clerk Sanders in.

8 She has tain a napkin in her hand,
And she ty'd up baith her een; 30
She was to swear, her oth to save,
She saw na him sene late yestreen.

9 She has taen him in her armes twa,
And carried him ben into her bed;
She was to swear, her oth to save,
He never in her bower-floor tread.

10 In and came her seven brothers,
And all their torches burning bright;
Says thay, 'We hae but ae sister,
And see there her lying wi a knight.'

11 Out and speaks the first of them, 40
'A wat³ they hay been lovers dear;'
Out and speaks the next of them,
'They hay been in love this many a
year.'

12 Out an speaks the third of them,
'It wear great sin this twa to twain;'⁴
Out an speaks the fourth of them,
'It wear a sin to kill a sleeping
man.'

¹ within.² I ween.³ sunder.

13 Out an speaks the fifth of them,
 'A wat they'll near be twained by
 me;' 50

Out an speaks the sixt of them,
 'We'll tak our leave an gae our
 way.'

14 Out an speaks the seventh of them,
 'Altho there wear no a man but me,
 I bear the brand, I'll gar him die.'

15 Out he has taen a bright long brand,
 And he has striped it throw the straw,
 And throw and throw Clarke Sanders'
 body
 A wat he has gard¹ cold iron gae.

16 Sanders he started, an Margret she lapt,
 Intill his arms where she lay, 61
 And well and wellsom was the night,
 A wat it was between these twa.

17 And they lay still, and slept sound,
 Untill the day began to daw;²
 And kindly till him she did say
 'It's time, trew-love, ye wear awa.'

18 They lay still, and slept sound,
 Until the sun began to shine;
 She lookt between her and the wa, 70
 And dull and heavy was his een.

19 She thought it had been a loathsome
 sweat,
 A wat it had fallen this twa between;
 But it was the blood of his fair body,
 A wat his life days wair na lang.

20 'O Sanders, I'll do for your sake
 What other ladys would na thoule;³
 When seven years is come and gone,
 There's near a shoe go on my sole.

21 'O Sanders, I'll do for your sake 80
 What other ladies would think mare;
 When seven years is come an gone,
 Ther's nere a comb go in my hair.

22 'O Sanders, I'll do for your sake
 What other ladies would think lack;
 When seven years is come an gone,
 I'll wear nought but dowy⁴ black.'

¹ I wot he has made.
² endure.

³ dawn.
⁴ dismal.

23 The bells gaed clinking throw the townie,
 To carry the dead corps to the clay,
 An sighing says her May Margret, 90
 'A wat I bide a doulfou day.'

24 In an come her father dear,
 Stout steping on the floor;

25 'Hold your tounge, my doughter dear,
 Let all your mourning a bee;
 I'll carry the dead corpse to the clay,
 An I'll come back an comfort thee.'

26 'Comfort well your seven sons,
 For comforted will I never bee;
 For it was neither lord nor loune 100
 That was in bower last night wi mee.'

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET

1 LORD THOMAS and Fair Annet
 Sate a' day on a hill;
 Whan night was cum, and sun was sett,
 They had not talkt their fill.

2 Lord Thomas said a word in jest,
 Fair Annet took it ill:
 'A, I will nevir wed a wife.
 Against my ain friends' will.'

3 'Gif ye wull nevir wed a wife,
 A wife wull neir wed yee:' 10
 Sae he is hame to tell his mither,
 And knelt upon his knee.

4 'O rede, O rede, mither,' he says,
 'A gude rede⁵ gie to mee;
 O sall I tak the nut-browne bride,
 And let Faire Annet bee?'

5 'The nut-browne bride haes gowd and
 gear,
 Fair Annet she has gat nane;
 And the little beauty Fair Annet haes
 O it wull soon be gane.' 20

6 And he has till his brother gane:
 'Now, brother, rede ye mee;
 A, sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
 And let Fair Annet bee?'

⁵ counsel.

7 'The nut-browne bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-browne bride has kye;¹
I wad hae ye marrie the nut-browne
bride,
And cast Fair Annet bye.'

8 'Her oxen may dye i the house, billie,
And her kye into the byre,²
And I sall hae nothing to mysell
Bot a fat fadge³ by the fyre.'

9 And he has till his sister gane:
'Now, sister, rede ye mee;
O sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And set Fair Annet free?'

10 'I 'se rede ye tak Fair Annet, Thomas,
And let the browne bride alane;
Lest ye sould sigh, and say, "Alace,
What is this we brought hame!"'

11 'No, I will tak my mither's counsel,
And marrie me owt o hand;
And I will tak the nut-browne bride,
Fair Annet may leive the land.'

12 Up then rose Fair Annet's father,
Twa hours or it wer day,
And he is gane into the bower
Wherein Fair Annet lay.

13 'Rise up, rise up, Fair Annet,' he says,
'Put on your silken sheene;⁴
Let us gae to St. Marie's kirke,
And see that rich weddeen.'

14 'My maides, gae to my dressing-roome,
And dress to me my hair;
Whaireir yee laid a plait before,
See yee lay ten times mair.

15 'My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
And dress to me my smock;
The one half is o the holland⁵ fine,
The other o needle-work.'

16 The horse Fair Annet rade upon,
He amblit like the wind;
Wi siller he was shod before,
Wi burning gowd behind.

17 Four and twanty siller bells
Wer a' tyed till his mane,

And yae tift⁶ o the norland wind,
They tinkled ane by ane.

18 Four and twanty gay gude knights
Rade by Fair Annet's side,
And four and twanty fair ladies,
As gin she had bin a bride.

19 And whan she cam to Marie's kirk,
She sat on Marie's stean;⁷
The cleading⁸ that Fair Annet had on
It skinkled⁹ in their een.

20 And whan she cam into the kirk,
She shimmerd like the sun;
The belt that was about her waist
Was a' wi pearles bedone.

21 She sat her by the nut-browne bride,
And her een they wer sae clear,
Lord Thomas he clean forgot the bride,
Whan Fair Annet drew near.

22 He had a rose into his hand,
He gae it kisses three,
And reaching by the nut-browne bride,
Laid it on Fair Annet's knee.

23 Up than spak the nut-browne bride,
She spak wi meikle spite:
'And whair gat ye that rose-water,
That does mak yee sae white?'

24 'O I did get the rose-water
Whair ye wull neir get nane,
For I did get that very rose-water
Into my mither's wame.'

25 The bride she drew a long bodkin
Frae out her gay head-gear,
And strake Fair Annet unto the heart,
That word spak nevir mair.

26 Lord Thomas he saw Fair Annet wax
pale,
And marvelit what mote bee;
But whan he saw her dear heart's blude,
A' wood-wroth¹¹ waxed hee.

27 He drew his dagger, that was sae sharp,
That was sae sharp and meet,
And drave it into the nut-browne bride,
That fell deid at his feit.

1 kine. 3 cow-shed. 5 dumpy woman.
4 splendor. 6 linen.

6 one gust. 7 stone. 8 clothing.
9 shone. 10 womb. 11 mad-angry.

28 'Now stay for me, dear Annet,' he sed,
 'Now stay, my dear,' he cry'd; ¹¹⁰
 Then strake the dagger untill his heart,
 And fell deid by her side.

29 Lord Thomas was buried without
 kirkwa,
 Fair Annet within the quiere,
 And o the tane thair grew a birk,¹
 The other a bonny briere.

30 And ay they grew, and ay they threw,²
 As they wad faine be neare;
 And by this ye may ken right weil
 They were twa luvvers deare. ¹²⁰

LOVE GREGOR ³

1 'O WHA will shoe my fu fair foot?
 And wha will glove my hand?
 And wha will lace my middle jimp,⁴
 Wi the new made London band?

2 'And wha will kaim my yellow hair,
 Wi the new made silver kaim?
 And wha will father my young son,
 Till Love Gregor come hame?'

3 'Your father will shoe your fu fair foot,
 Your mother will glove your hand; ¹⁰
 Your sister will lace your middle jimp
 Wi the new made London band.

4 'Your brother will kaim your yellow
 hair,
 Wi the new made silver kaim;
 And the king of heaven will father
 your bairn,
 Till Love Gregor come haim.'

5 'But I will get a bonny boat,
 And I will sail the sea,
 For I maun gang to Love Gregor,
 Since he canno come hame to me.'²⁰

6 O she has gotten a bonny boat,
 And sailld the sa't sea fame;
 She langd to see her ain true-love,
 Since he could no come hame.

7 'O row your boat, my mariners,
 And bring me to the land,

For yonder I see my love's castle,
 Closs by the sa't sea strand.'

8 She has taen her young son in her arms,
 And to the door she's gone, ³⁰
 And lang she's knocked and sair she ca'd,
 But answer got she none.

9 'O open the door, Love Gregor,' she says,
 'O open, and let me in;
 For the win blaws thro my yellow hair,
 And the rain draps oer my chin.'

10 'Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
 You'r nae come here for good;
 You'r but some witch, or wile warlock,⁶
 Or mer-maid of the flood.' ⁴⁰

11 'I am neither a witch nor a wile warlock,
 Nor mer-maid of the sea,
 I am Fair Annie of Rough Royal;
 O open the door to me.'

12 'Gin ye be Annie of Rough Royal —
 And I trust ye are not she —
 Now tell me some of the love-tokens
 That past between you and me.'

13 'O dinna you mind now, Love Gregor,
 When we sat at the wine, ⁵⁰
 How we changed the rings frae our
 fingers?
 And I can show thee thine.

14 'O yours was good, and good enneugh,
 But ay the best was mine;
 For yours was o the good red goud,
 But mine o the diamonds fine.

15 'But open the door now, Love Gregor,
 Open the door I pray,
 For your young son that is in my arms
 Will be dead ere it be day.' ⁶⁰

16 'Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
 For here ye shanno win in;
 Gae drown ye in the raging sea,
 Or hang on the gallows-pin.'

17 When the cock had crawn, and day did
 dawn,
 And the sun began to peep,
 Then it raise him Love Gregor,
 And sair, sair did he weep.

⁵ wizard.

¹ birch.

² twisted.

³ Also known as *The Lass of Roch Royal*.

⁴ small.

- 18 'O I dreamd a dream, my mother dear,
The thoughts o it gars me greet,¹ 70
That Fair Annie of Rough Royal
Lay could dead at my feet.'
- 19 'Gin it be for Annie of Rough Royal
That ye make a' this din,
She stood a' last night at this door,
But I trow she wan no in.'
- 20 'O wae betide ye, ill woman,
An ill dead may ye die!
That ye woudno open the door to her,
Nor yet woud waken me.' 80
- 21 O he has gone down to yon shore-side,
As fast as he could fare;
He saw Fair Annie in her boat,
But the wind it tossed her sair.
- 22 And 'Hey, Annie!' and 'How, Annie!
O Annie, winna ye bide?'
But aye the mair that he cried Annie,
The braider grew the tide.
- 23 And 'Hey, Annie!' and 'How, Annie!
Dear Annie speak to me!' 90
But ay the louder he cried Annie,
The louder roard the sea.
- 24 The wind blew loud, the sea grew rough,
And dashed the boat on shore;
Fair Annie floats on the raging sea,
But her young son raise no more.
- 25 Love Gregor tare his yellow hair,
And made a heavy moan;
Fair Annie's corpse lay at his feet,
But his bonny young son was gone.
- 26 O cherry, cherry was her cheek, 101
And gowden was her hair,
But clay cold were her rosey lips,
Nae spark of life was there.
- 27 And first he's kissd her cherry cheek,
And neist he's kissed her chin;
And saftly pressed her rosey lips,
But there was nae breath within.
- 28 'O wae betide my cruel mother,
And an ill dead may she die! 110
For she turnd my true-love frae my door,
When she came sae far to me.'

¹ makes me cry.

SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST

- 1 WHAN bells war rung, an mass was
sung,
A wat a' man² to bed were gone,
Clark Sanders came to Margret's win-
dow,
With mony a sad sigh and groan.
- 2 'Are ye sleeping, Margret,' he says,
'Or are ye waking, presentlie?
Give me my faith and trouthe again,
A wat, trew-love, I gied to thee.'
- 3 'Your faith and trouth ye's never get,
Nor our trew love shall never twain,³
Till ye come with me in my bower, 11
And kiss me both cheek and chin.'
- 4 'My mouth it is full cold, Margret,
It has the smell now of the ground;
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,
Thy life-days will not be long.
- 5 'Cocks are crowing a merry mid-larf, ⁴
I wat the wild fule⁵ boded day;
Gie me my faith and trouthe again,
And let me fare me on my way.' 20
- 6 'Thy faith and trouth thou shall na get,
Nor our trew love shall never twin,
Till ye tell me what comes of women
A wat that dy's in strong traveling.'
- 7 'Their beds are made in the heavens
high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's
knee,
Well set about wi gilly-flowers,
A wat sweet company for to see.
- 8 'O cocks are crowing a merry midd-
larf,
A wat the wilde foule boded day; 30
The salms of Heaven will be sung,
And ere now I 'le be misst away.'
- 9 Up she has tain a bright long wand,
And she has straked⁶ her trouth
thereon;
She has given (it) him out at the shot-
window,
Wi many a sad sigh and heavy groan.

² Surely all men. ³ part. ⁴ A doubtful word.⁵ fowl. ⁶ stroked, i.e., transferred it to the wand.

10 'I thank you, Margret, I thank you,
Margret,
And I thank you hartilie;
Gine ever the dead come for the quick,
Be sure, Margret, I'll come again for
thee.' 40

11 It's hose an shoon an gound¹ alane
She clame the wall and followed him,
Untill she came to a green forest,
On this she lost the sight of him.

12 'Is there any room at your head, San-
ders?
Is there any room at your feet?
Or any room at your twa sides?
Whare fain, fain woud I sleep.'

13 'There is na room at my head, Margret,
There is na room at my feet; 50
There is room at my twa sides,
For ladys for to sleep.

14 'Cold meal² is my covering owre,
But an my winding sheet;
My bed it is full low, I say,
Down among the hongerey worms I
sleep.

15 'Cold meal is my covering owre,
But an my winding sheet;
The dew it falls na sooner down
Than ay it is full weat.' 60

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

1 THERE lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons
And sent them oer the sea.

2 They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife³
That her three sons were gane.

3 They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three, 10
Whan word came to the carlin wife
That her sons she'd never see.

4 'I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes⁴ in the flood,

¹ gown. ² mould. ³ old woman. ⁴ troubles.

Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood.'

5 It fell about the Martinmass,
When nights are lang and mirk,⁵
The carlin wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o the birk.⁶ 20

6 It neither grew in syke⁷ nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony shengh⁸;
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair enough.

7 'Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well.'

8 And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide, 30
And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

9 Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
'Tis time we were away.'

10 The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
'Brother, we must awa.' 40

11 'The cock doth crawl, the day doth daw,
The channerin⁹ worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

12 'Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre¹⁰!

13 And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!'

LITTLE MUSGRAVE AND LADY BARNARD

1 As it fell one holy-day,
Hay downe,
As many be in the yeare,
When young men and maids together
did goe,
Their mattins and masse to heare,

⁵ dark. ⁶ birch. ⁷ trench. ⁸ furrow.
⁹ grambing. ¹⁰ cow-house.

- 2 Little Musgrave came to the church-
dore;
The preist was at private masse;
But he had more minde of the faire women
Than he had of our lady[^s] grace.
- 3 The one of them was clad in green, 10
Another was clad in pall,¹
And then came in my Lord Barnard's
wife,
The fairest amonst them all.
- 4 She cast an eye on Little Musgrave,
As bright as the summer sun;
And then bethought this Little Musgrave,
This lady's heart have I woonn.
- 5 Quoth she, 'I have loved thee, Little
Musgrave,
Full long and many a day;' 20
'So have I loved you, fair lady,
Yet never word durst I say.'
- 6 'I have a bower at Buckelsfordbery,
Full daintly it is deight;
If thou wilt wend thither, thou Little
Musgrave,
Thou's lig² in mine armes all night.'
- 7 Quoth he, 'I thank yee, faire lady,
This kindnes thou showest to me;
But whether it be to my weal or woe,
This night I will lig with thee.'
- 8 With that he heard, a little tynè page,
By his ladye's coach as he ran: 31
'All though I am my ladye's foot-page,
Yet I am Lord Barnard's man.
- 9 'My lord Barnard shall knowe of this,
Whether I sink or swim;'
And ever where the bridges were broake
He laid him downe to swimme.
- 10 'A sleepe or wake, thou Lord Barnard,
As thou art a man of life,
For Little Musgrave is at Bucklesford-
bery, 40
A bed with thy own wedded wife.'
- 11 'If this be true, thou little tinny page,
This thing thou tellest to me,
Then all the land in Bucklesfordbery
I freely will give to thee.
¹ purple. ² Thou shalt lie.
- 12 'But if it be a ly, thou little tinny page,
This thing thou tellest to me,
On the hyst tree in Bucklesfordbery
Then hanged shalt thou be.'
- 13 He called up his merry men all: 50
'Come saddle me my steed;
This night must I to Buckellsfordbery,
For I never had greater need.'
- 14 And some of them whistld, and some of
them sung,
And some these words did say,
And ever when my lord Barnard's horn
blew,
'Away, Musgrave, away!'
- 15 'Methinks I hear the thresel-cock,
Methinks I hear the jaye;
Methinks I hear my lord Barnard, 60
And I would I were away.'
- 16 'Lye still, lye still, thou Little Musgrave,
And huggell me from the cold;
'Tis nothing but a shephard's boy,
A driving his sheep to the fold.
- 17 'Is not thy hawke upon a perch?
Thy steed eats oats and hay;
And thou a fair lady in thine armes,
And wouldst thou bee away?'
- 18 With that my lord Barnard came to the
dore, 70
And lit a stone upon;
He plucked out three silver keys,
And he opened the dores each one.
- 19 He lifted up the coverlett,
He lifted up the sheet:
'How now, how now, thou Littell Mus-
grave,
Doest thou find my lady sweet?'
- 20 'I find her sweet,' quoth Little Mus-
grave,
'The more 'tis to my paine;
I would gladly give three hundred
pounds 80
That I were on yonder plaine.'
- 21 'Arise, arise, thou Littell Musgrave,
And put thy clothes on;
It shall nere be said in my country
I have killed a naked man.

- 22 'I have two swords in one scabberd,
Full deere they cost my purse;
And thou shalt have the best of them,
And I will have the worse.'
- 23 The first stroke that Little Musgrave
stroke, 90
He hurt Lord Barnard sore;
The next stroke that Lord Barnard
stroke,
Little Musgrave nere struck more.
- 24 With that bespake this faire lady,
In bed whereas she lay:
'Although thou 'rt dead, thou Little
Musgrave,
Yet I for thee will pray.
- 25 'And wish well to thy soule will I,
So long as I have life;
So will I not for thee, Barnard, 100
Although I am thy wedded wife.'
- 26 He cut her paps from off her brest;
Great pity it was to see
That some drops of this ladie's heart's
blood
Ran trickling downe her knee.
- 27 'Woe worth you, woe worth, my mery
men all,
You were nere borne for my good;
Why did you not offer to stay my
hand,
When you see me wax so wood ?
- 28 'For I have slaine the bravest sir knight
That ever rode on steed; 111
So have I done the fairest lady
That ever did woman's deed.
- 29 'A grave, a grave,' Lord Barnard cryd,
'To put these lovers in;
But lay my lady on the upper hand,
For she came of the better kin.'
- 2 He sent his man down through the
town,
To the place where she was dwelling:
'O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan.'
- 3 O hooly,¹ hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying, 10
And when she drew the curtain by,
'Young man, I think you 're dying.'
- 4 'O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And 'tis a' for Barbara Allan.'
'O the better for me ye's never be,
Tho your heart's blood were a spill-
ing.
- 5 'O dinna ye mind, young man,' said
she,
'When ye was in the tavern a drink-
ing,
That ye made the healths gae round and
round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?' 20
- 6 He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing:
'Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan.'
- 7 And slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said, she could not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.
- 8 She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ring-
ing, 30
And every jow² that the dead-bell
geid,³
It cry'd, 'Woe to Barbara Allan!'
- 9 'O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft and narrow!
Since my love died for me to-day,
I'll die for him to-morrow.'

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

LAMKIN

- 1 It was in and about the Martinmas
time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Græme, in the West
Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.
- 1 It's Lamkin was a mason good
as ever built wi stane;
He built Lord Wearie's castle,
but payment got he nane.

¹ slowly. ² stroke. ³ struck.

- 2 'O pay me, Lord Wearie,
come, pay me my fee:
'I canna pay you, Lamkin,
for I maun gang oer the sea.'
- 3 'O pay me now, Lord Wearie,
come, pay me out o hand: 10
'I canna pay you, Lamkin,
unless I sell my land.'
- 4 'O gin ye winna pay me,
I here sall mak a vow,
Before that ye come hame again,
ye sall hae cause to rue.'
- 5 Lord Wearie got a bonny ship,
to sail the saut sea faem;
Bade his lady weel the castle keep,
ay till he should come hame. 20
- 6 But the nourice was a fause limmer 1
as eer hung on a tree;
She laid a plot wi Lamkin,
whan her lord was oer the sea.
- 7 She laid a plot wi Lamkin,
when the servants were awa,
Loot him in at a little shot-window,²
and brought him to the ha.
- 8 'O whare's a' the men o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?' 30
'They're at the barn-well thrashing;
't will be lang ere they come in.'
- 9 'And whare's the women o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?'
'They're at the far well washing;
't will be lang ere they come in.'
- 10 'And whare's the bairns o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?' 39
'They're at the school reading;
't will be night or they come hame.'
- 11 'O whare's the lady o this house,
that ca's me Lamkin?'
'She's up in her bower sewing,
but we soon we can bring her down.'
- 12 Then Lamkin's tane a sharp knife,
that hang down by his gaire,³
And he has gien the bonny babe
a deep wound and a sair.
- 13 Then Lamkin he rocked,
and the fause nourice sang, 50
Till frae ilkae bore⁴ o the cradle
the red blood out sprang.
- 14 Then out it spak the lady,
as she stood on the stair:
'What ails my bairn, nourice,
that he's greeting sae sair?'
- 15 'O still my bairn nourice,
O still him with the pap!'⁵
'He winna still, lady,
for this nor for that.' 60
- 16 'O still my bairn, nourice,
O still him wi the wand!'
'He winna still, lady,
for a' his father's land.'
- 17 'O still my bairn, nourice,
O still him wi the bell!'
'He winna still, lady,
till ye come down yoursel.'
- 18 O the firsten step she steppit,
she steppit on a stane; 70
But the neisten step she steppit,
she met him Lamkin.
- 19 'O mercy, mercy, Lamkin,
hae mercy upon me!
Though you've taen my young son's life,
ye may let mysel be.'
- 20 'O sall I kill her, nourice,
or sall I lat her be?'
'O kill her, kill her, Lamkin,
for she neer was good to me.' 80
- 21 'O scour the bason, nourice,
and mak it fair and clean,
For to keep this lady's heart's blood,
for she's come o noble kin.'
- 22 'There need nae bason, Lamkin,
lat it run through the floor;
What better is the heart's blood
o the rich than o the poor?'
- 23 But ere three months were at an end,
Lord Wearie came again; 90
But dowie,⁶ dowie was his heart
when first he came hame.

1 wretch. 2 top-hinged window. 3 gore.

4 hole. 5 breast. 6 sad.

- 24 'O wha's blood is this,' he says,
that lies in the chamers?¹
'It is your lady's heart's blood;
't is as clear as the lamer.'²
- 25 'And wha's blood is this,' he says,
'that lies in my ha?'
'It is your young son's heart's blood;
't is the clearest ava.'³ 100
- 26 O sweetly sang the black-bird
that sat upon the tree;
But sairer grat⁴ Lamkin,
when he was condemnd to die.
- 27 And bonny sang the mavis,⁵
out o the thorny brake;
But sairer grat the nourice,
when she was tied to the stake.

YOUNG WATERS

- 1 ABOUT Yule, when the wind blew
cule,
And the round tables⁶ began,
A there is cum to our king's court
Mony a well-favord man.
- 2 The queen luikt owre the castle-wa,
Beheld baith dale and down,
And there she saw Young Waters
Cum riding to the town.
- 3 His footmen they did rin before,
His horsemen rade behind; 10
And mantel of the burning gowd
Did keip him frae the wind.
- 4 Gowden-graithd⁷ his horse before,
And siller-shod behind;
The horse Young Waters rade upon
Was fleeter than the wind.
- 5 Out then spack a wylie lord,
Unto the queen said he,
'O tell me wha's the fairest face
Rides in the company?' 20
- 6 'I've sene lord, and I've sene laird,
And knights of high degree,
Bot a fairer face than Young Waters
Mine eyne did never see.'

- 7 Out then spack the jealous king,
And an angry man was he:
'O if he had bin twice as fair,
You micht have excepted me.'
- 8 'You're neither laird nor lord,' she
says, 29
'Bot the king that wears the crown;
There is not a knight in fair Scot-
land
But to thee maun⁸ bow down.'
- 9 For a' that she coud do or say,
Appeas'd he wad nae bee,
Bot for the words which she had said,
Young Waters he maun die.
- 10 They hae taen Young Waters,
And put fetters to his feet;
They hae taen Young Waters,
And thrown him in dungeon deep. 40
- 11 'Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
In the wind bot and⁹ the weit;
But I neir rade thro Stirling town
Wi fetters at my feet.
- 12 'Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
In the wind bot and the rain;
Bot I neir rade thro Stirling town
Neir to return again.'
- 13 They hae taen to the heiding-hill
His young son in his cradle, 50
And they hae taen to the heiding-hill
His horse bot and his saddle.
- 14 They hae taen to the heiding-hill
His lady fair to see,
And for the words the queen had
spoke
Young Waters he did die.

THE MAID FREED FROM THE
GALLOWS 10

- 1 'O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord
Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own father,
Come riding by the stile.

¹ chamber. ² amber. ³ of all. ⁴ wept.
⁵ thrush. ⁶ a game. ⁷ Gold-shod.

⁸ must. ⁹ and also.
¹⁰ This ballad is often cited as an example of genuine
ballad structure.

- 2 'Oh father, oh father, a little of your
gold,
And likewise of your fee!
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree.'
- 3 'None of my gold now you shall have,
Nor likewise of my fee; 10
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hanged you shall be.
- 4 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord
Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own mother,
Come riding by the stile.
- 5 'Oh mother, oh mother, a little of your
gold,
And likewise of your fee, 18
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!'
- 6 'None of my gold now shall you have,
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hanged you shall be.'
- 7 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord
Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own brother,
Come riding by the stile.'
- 8 'Oh brother, oh brother, a little of your
gold,
And likewise of your fee, 30
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!'
- 9 'None of my gold now shall you have.
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hanged you shall be.'
- 10 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord
Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own sister.
Come riding by the stile. 40
- 11 'Oh sister, oh sister, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!'

- 12 'None of my gold now shall you have,
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd
And hanged you shall be.'
- 13 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord
Judge,
Peace for a little while! 50
Methinks I see my own true-love,
Come riding by the stile.
- 14 'Oh true-love, oh true-love, a little of
your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To save my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree.'
- 15 'Some of my gold now you shall have,
And likewise of my fee,
For I am come to see you saved,
And saved you shall be.' 60

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK

- 1 'O WELL's me o my gay goss-hawk,
That he can speak and flee;
He'll carry a letter to my love,
Bring back another to me.'
- 2 'O how can I your true-love ken,¹
Or how can I her know?
Whan frae her mouth I never heard couth,²
Nor wi my eyes her saw.'
- 3 'O well sal ye my true-love ken,
As soon as you her see; 10
For, of a' the flours in fair Englan,
The fairest flour is she.
- 4 'At even at my love's bowr-door
There grows a bowing birk,
An sit ye down and sing thereon,
As she gangs to the kirk.
- 5 'An four-and-twenty ladies fair
Will wash and go to kirk,
But well shall ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her skirt. 20
- 6 'An four and twenty gay ladies
Will to the mass repair,
But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her hair.'

¹ know.² sound, word.

- 7 O even at that lady's bowr-door,
There grows a bowin birk,
An he set down and sang thereon,
As she ged to the kirk.
- 8 'O eet and drink, my marys¹ a',
The wine flows you among, 30
Till I gang to my shot-window,
An hear yon bonny bird's song.
- 9 'Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The song ye sang the streen,²
For I ken by your sweet singin
You're frae my true-love sen.'
- 10 O first he sang a merry song,
An then he sang a grave,
An then he peckd his feathers gray,
To her the letter gave. 40
- 11 'Ha, there's a letter frae your love,
He says he sent you three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he'll die.
- 12 'He bids you write a letter to him;
He says he's sent you five;
He canno wait your love langer,
Tho you're the fairest woman alive.'
- 13 'Ye bid him bake his bridal-bread,
And brew his bridal-ale, 50
An I'll meet him in fair Scotlan
Lang, lang or it be stale.'
- 14 She's doen her to her father dear,
Fa'n low down on her knee:
'A boon, a boon, my father dear,
I pray you, grant it me.'
- 15 'Ask on, ask on, my daughter,
An granted it sal be;
Except ae squire in fair Scotlan,
An him you sall never see.' 60
- 16 'The only boon, my father dear,
That I do crave of the,
Is, gin I die in southin lands,
In Scotland to bury me.
- 17 'An the firstin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the mess be sung.
¹ maids. ² yester evening.
- 18 'And the thirdin kirk that ye come
till,
You deal gold for my sake, 70
An the fourthin kirk that ye come till,
You tarry there till night.'
- 19 She is doen her to her bigly³ bowr,
As fast as she coud fare,
An she has tane a sleepy draught,
That she had mixed wi care.
- 20 She's laid her down upon her bed,
An soon she's fa'n asleep,
And soon oer every tender limb
Could death began to creep. 80
- 21 Whan night was fown, an day was
come,
Nae ane that did her see
But thought she was as surely dead
As ony lady coud be.
- 22 Her father an her brothers dear
Gard make⁴ to her a bier;
The tae half was o guide red gold,
The tither o silver clear.
- 23 Her mither an her sisters fair
Gard work for her a sark; ⁵ 90
The tae half was o cambrick fine,
The tither o needle wark.
- 24 The firstin kirk that they came till,
They gard the bells be rung,
And the nextin kirk that they came
till,
They gard the mess be sung.
- 25 The thirdin kirk that they came till,
They dealt gold for her sake,
An the fourthin kirk that they came
till,
Lo, there they met her make!⁶ 100
- 26 'Lay down, lay down the bigly bier.
Lat me the dead look on;⁷
Wi cheery cheeks and ruby lips
She lay an smil'd on him.
- 27 'O ae sheave⁷ o your bread, true-love,
An ae glass o your wine,
For I hae fasted for your sake
These fully days is nine.

³ fine.⁴ Had made.⁵ mate, lover.⁶ shirt, shroud.⁷ slice.

- 28 'Gang hame, gang hame, my seven bold
brothers,
Gang hame and sound your horn; 110
An ye may boast in southin lans
Your sister's playd you scorn.'

THE BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON

- 1 THERE was a youth, and a well belovd
youth,
And he was a esquire's son,
He loved the bayliff's daughter dear,
That lived in Islington.
- 2 She was coy, and she would not believe
That he did love her so,
No, nor at any time she would
Any countenance to him show.
- 3 But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind, 10
They sent him up to fair London,
An apprentice for to bind.
- 4 And when he had been seven long years,
And his love he had not seen,
'Many a tear have I shed for her sake
When she little thought of me.'
- 5 All the maids of Islington
Went forth to sport and play;
All but the bayliff's daughter dear;
She secretly stole away. 20
- 6 She put off her gown of gray,
And put on her puggish¹ attire;
She's up to fair London gone,
Her true-love to require.
- 7 As she went along the road,
The weather being hot and dry,
There was she aware of her true-love,
At length came riding by.
- 8 She stept to him, as red as any rose,
And took him by the bridle-ring: 30
'I pray you, kind sir, give me one penny,
To ease my weary limb.'
- 9 'I prithee, sweetheart, canst thou tell
me
Where that thou wast born?'

¹ ragged? tramp's?

At Islington, kind sir,' said she,
'Where I have had many a scorn.'

- 10 'I prithee, sweetheart, canst thou tell
me
Whether thou dost know
The bailiff's daughter of Islington?'
'She's dead, sir, long ago.' 40
- 11 'Then will I sell my goodly steed,
My saddle and my bow;
I will into some far countrey,
Where no man doth me know.'
- 12 'O stay, O stay, thou goodly youth!
She's alive, she is not dead;
Here she standeth by thy side,
And is ready to be thy bride.'
- 13 'O farewell grief, and welcome joy,
Ten thousand times and more! 50
For now I have seen my own true-love,
That I thought I should have seen no
more.'

THE GREAT SILKIE OF SULE SKERRY²

- 1 AN eartly nourris sits and sings,
And aye she sings, 'Ba, lily wean!
Little ken I my bairnis father,
Far less the land that he staps in.'
- 2 Then ane arose at her bed-ft,
An a grumly³ guest I'm sure was he:
'Here am I, thy bairnis father,
Although that I be not comelie.
- 3 'I am a man, upo the lan,
An I am a silkie in the sea; 10
And when I'm far and far frae lan,
My dwelling is in Sule Skerrie.'
- 4 'It was na weel,' quo the maiden fair,
'It was na weel, indeed,' quo she,
'That the Great Silkie of Sule Skerrie
Suld hae come and aught⁴ a bairn to
me.'
- 5 Now he has taen a purse of goud,
And he has pat it upo her knee,

² "The Great Seal of Sule Reef." This fine ballad, reminding one of Arnold's *Forsaken Mermaid*, was obtained from an old lady in the Shetland Islands in 1852.

³ fierce.

⁴ owed.

Sayin, 'Gie to me my little young son,
An tak thee up thy nourris-fee. 20

6 'An it sall come to pass on a simmer's
day,

When the sin shines het on evera stane,
That I will tak my little young son,
An teach him for to swim the faem.

7 'An thu sall marry a proud gunner,
An a proud gunner I'm sure he'll be,
An the very first schot that ere he schoots,
He'll schoot baith my young son and
me.'

JOHNIE COCK

1 JOHNNY he has risen up i the morn,
Calls for water to wash his hands;
But little knew he that his bloody hounds
Were bound in iron bands.¹ bands
Were bound in iron bands.

2 Johnny's mother has gotten word o that,
And care-bed² she has taen :
'O Johnny, for my benison,
I beg you 'l stay at hame;
For the wine so red, and the well baken
bread, 10
My Johnny shall want nane.

3 'There are seven forsters at Pickeram
Side,
At Pickeram where they dwell,
And for a drop of thy heart's bluid
They wad ride the fords of hell.'

4 Johnny he's gotten word of that,
And he's turnd wondrous keen;
He's put off the red scarlett,
And he's put on the Lincoln green.

5 With a sheaf of arrows by his side, 20
And a bent bow in his hand,
He's mounted on a prancing steed,
And he has ridden fast oer the strand.

6 He's up i Braidhouplee, and down i
Bradyslee,
And under a buss⁸ o broom,
And there he found a good dun deer,
Feeding in a buss of ling.⁴

¹ Because it was the close season? But cf. stanza 9.
² sick-bed. ³ bush. ⁴ heather.

7 Johnny shot, and the dun deer lap,
And she lap wondrous wide,
Until they came to the wan water, 30
And he stemd her of her pride.

8 He 'as taen out the little pen-knife,
'T was full three quarters⁵ long,
And he has taen out of that dun deer
The liver bot and⁶ the tongue.

9 They eat of the flesh, and they drank of
the blood,
And the blood it was so sweet,
Which caused Johnny and his bloody
hounds
To fall in a deep sleep.

10 By then came an old palmer, 40
And an ill death may he die !
For he's away to Pickram Side,
As fast as he can drie.⁷

11 'What news, what news?' says the
Seven Forsters,
'What news have ye brought to me?'
'I have noe news,' the palmer said,
'But what I saw with my eye.

12 'High up i Bradyslee, low down i
Bradisslee,
And under a buss of scroggs,⁸
O there I spied a well-wight⁹ man, 50
Sleeping among his dogs.

13 'His coat it was of Light Lincoln,
And his breeches of the same,
His shoes of the American leather,
And gold buckles tying them.'

14 Up bespake the Seven Forsters,
Up bespake they aye and a':
'O that is Johnny o Cockleys Well,
And near him we will draw.'

15 O the first y¹⁰ stroke that they gae him,
They struck him off by the knee; 61
Then up bespake his sister's son:
'O the next 'll gar him die !'

16 'O some they count ye well-wight men,
But I do count ye nane;
For you might well ha waked me,
And askd gin I wad¹¹ be taen.

⁵ Of a yard. ⁶ and also. ⁷ stand it. ⁸ shrubs.
⁹ right doughty. ¹⁰ one. ¹¹ if I would.

17 'The wildest wolf in aw this wood
Wad not ha done so by me;
She'd ha wet her foot ith wan water, 70
And sprinkled it oer my brae,¹
And if that wad not ha wakend me,
She wad ha gone and let me be.

18 'O bows of yew, if ye be true,
In London, where ye were bought,
Fingers five, get up belive,
Manhuid shall fail me nought.'

19 He has killd the Seven Forsters,
He has killd them all but ane, 79
And that wan scarce to Pickram Side,
To carry the bode-words² hame.

20 'Is there never a boy³ in a' this wood
That will tell what I can say;
That will go to Cockleys Well,
Tell my mither to fetch me away?'

21 There was a boy into that wood,
That carried the tidings away,
And many ae⁴ was the well-wight man
At the fetching o Johny away.

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE⁵

1 WHEN shawes⁶ beene sheene, and
shradds⁷ full fayre,
And leeves both large and longe,
Itt is merry, walking in the fayre ffor-
rest,
To heare the small birds songe.

2 The woodweele⁸ sang, and wold not
cease,
Amongst the leaves a lyne:⁹
And it is by two wight yeomen,
By deare God, that I meane.

¹ brow.

² news.

⁴ a one.

³ There are some two score ballads of Robin Hood, the oldest in a MS., of about 1450; and one of these, printed about 1500, is the *Gest of Robyn Hode* in 456 stanzas—apparently nothing less than a little popular epic, wrought from separate, episodic ballads. The material is of course much older, for in *Piers Plowman*, composed about 1377, we learn that Sloth knew "rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolf Earl of Chester" better than he did his paternoster. Robin is a ballad creation, the ideal champion of the common people against their secular and spiritual oppressors, and the embodiment of the old English love of fair play and the open air.

⁵ thickets. ⁷ coppices. ⁸ thrush? ⁹ of linden.

3 'Me thought they did mee beate and
binde,
And tooke my bow mee free; 10
If I bee Robin a-live in this lande,
I'le be wrocken¹⁰ on both them
towe.'¹¹

4 'Sweavens¹² are swift, master,' quoth Iohn
'As the wind that blowes ore a hill;
Ffor if itt be never soe lowde this night,
To-morrow it may be still.'

5 'Buske¹³ yee, bowne¹⁴ yee, my merry
men all.
Ffor Iohn shall goe with mee;
For I'le goe seeke yond wight yeomen
In greenwood where the bee.' 20

6 The cast on their gowne of greene,
A shooting gone are they,
Untill they came to the merry green-
wood,
Where they had gladdest bee;
There were the ware of [a] wight yeo-
man,
His body leaned to a tree.

7 A sword and a dagger he wore by his
side,
Had beene many a mans bane,¹⁵
And he was cladd in his capull-hyde,¹⁶
Topp, and tayle, and mayne. 30

8 'Stand you still, master,' quoth Litle
Iohn,
'Under this trusty tree,
And I will goe to yond wight yeoman,
To know his meaning trulye.'

9 'A, Iohn, by me thou setts noe store,
And that's a ffarley¹⁷ thinge;
How oft send I my men beffore,
And tarry my-selfe behinde?'

10 'It is noe cunning a knave to ken,
And¹⁸ a man but here him speake; 40
And itt were not for bursting of my
bowe,
Iohn, I wold thy head breake.'

11 But often words they breeden bale,¹⁹
That parted Robin and Iohn;

¹⁰ revenged.

¹¹ two.

¹² dreams.

¹³ Equip.

¹⁴ prepare.

¹⁵ destruction.

¹⁶ horse-hide.

¹⁷ strange.

¹⁸ If.

¹⁹ make trouble.

- John is gone to Barn [e] sdale,¹
The gates² he knowes eche one.
- 12 And when hee came to Barnesdale,
Great heaviness there hee hadd;
He ffound two of his fellows
Were slaine both in a slade,³ 50
- 13 And Scarlett a ffoote flyinge was,
Over stockes and stone,
For the sheriffe with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.
- 14 'Yett one shoote I 'le shoote,' sayes
Litle Iohn,
'With Crist his might and mayne;
I 'le make yond fellow *that* flyes soe fast
To be both glad and ffaine.'
- 15 Iohn bent vp a good veiwe⁴ bow,
And ffettede⁵ him to shoote; 60
The bow was made of a tender bough,
And fell downe to his foote.
- 16 'Woe worth thee, wicked wood,' sayd
Litle Iohn,
'*That* ere thou grew on a tree!
Ffor this day thou art my bale,
My boote⁶ when thou shold bee!'
- 17 This shoote it was but looselye shott,
The arrowe flew in vaine,
And it mett one of the sheriffes men;
Good William a Trent was slaine. 70
- 18 It had beene better for William a Trent
To hang upon a gallowe
Then for to lye in the greenwoode,
There slaine with an arrowe.
- 19 And it is sayd, when men be mett,
Six can doe more then three:
And they have tane Litle Iohn,
And bound him ffast to a tree.
- 20 'Thou shalt be drawn by dale and
downe,' quoth the sheriffe,
'And hanged hye on a hill:' 80
'But thou may ffayle,' quoth Litle Iohn,
'If itt be Christs owne will.'
- 21 Let us leave talking of Litle Iohn,
For hee is bound fast to a tree,
And talke of Guy and Robin Hood,
In the green woode where they bee.
- 22 How these two yeomen together they
mett,
Under the leaves of lyne,
To see what marchandise they made
Even at that same time. 90
- 23 'Good morrow, good fellow,' quoth
Sir Guy;
'Good morrow, good ffellow,' quoth
hee;
'Methinkes by this bow thou beares in
thy hand,
A good archer thou seems to bee.'
- 24 'I am wilfull of my way,'⁷ quoth Sir
Guye,
'And of my morning tyde:'⁸
'I 'le lead thee through the wood,'
quoth Robin,
'Good fellow, I 'le be thy guide.'
- 25 'I seeke an outlaw,' quoth Sir Guye,
'Men call him Robin Hood; 100
I had rather meet with him upon a day
Then forty pound of golde.'
- 26 'If you tow mett, itt wold be seene
whether were better
Afore yee did part awaye;
Let us some other pastime find,
Good fellow, I thee pray.
- 27 'Let us some other masteryes⁹ make,
And wee will walke in the woods even;
Wee may chance mee[t] with Robin
Hooode
Att some unsett steven.'¹⁰ 110
- 28 They cutt them downe the summer
shroggs¹¹
Which grew both under a bryar,
And sett them three score rood in
twinn,¹²
To shoote the prickes¹³ full neare.
- 29 'Leade on, good ffellow,' sayd Sir Guye,
'Lead on, I doe bidde thee :'
'Nay, by my faith,' quoth Robin Hood,
'The leader thou shalt bee.'
- ¹ In Yorkshire. ² ways. ³ valley.
⁴ yew. ⁵ prepared. ⁶ salvation.
- ⁷ i.e., am lost. ⁸ Possibly he wants to know the time,
as well as the road. ⁹ trials of skill. ¹⁰ unexpected
time. ¹¹ shrubs. ¹² rods distant. ¹³ targets.

- 30 The first good shoot *that* Robin ledd
Did not shoote an inch the pricke
ffroe; 120
Guy was an archer good enough,
But he cold neere shoote soe.
- 31 The second shoote Sir Guy shott,
He shott within the garlande;¹
But Robin Hoode shott it better then
hee,
For he clove the good pricke-wande.
- 32 'Gods blessing on thy heart!' sayes
Guye,
'Goode fellow, thy shooting is goode;
For an thy hart be as good as thy
hands,
Thou were better then Robin Hood.
- 33 'Tell me thy name, good fellow,'
quoth Guy, 131
'Under the leaves of lyne:'
'Nay, by my faith,' quoth good Robin,
'Till thou have told me thine.'
- 34 'I dwell by dale and downe,' quoth
Guye,
And I have done many a curst turne;
And he *that* calles me by my right
name
Calles me Guye of good Gysborne.'
- 35 'My dwelling is in the wood,' sayes
Robin;
'By thee I set right nought; 140
My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
A fellow thou has long sought.'
- 36 He *that* had neither beene a kithe nor
kin
Might have seene a full fayre sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
With blades both browne and bright.
- 37 To have seene how these yeomen to-
gether foug[ht],
Two howers of a summers day;
Itt was neither Guy nor Robin Hood
That fettleth them to flye away. 150
- 38 Robin was reacheles on ² a roote,
And stumbled at *that* tyde,
And Guy was quicke and nimble withall,
And hitt him ore the left side.
- 39 'Ah, deere Lady!' sayd Robin Hoode,
'Thou art both mother and may!'³
I thinke it was never mans destynye
To dye before his day.'
- 40 Robin thought on Our Lady deere,
And soone leapt up againe, 160
And thus he came with an awkwarde⁴
stroke;
Good Sir Guy hee has slayne.
- 41 He tooke Sir Guys head by the hayre,
And stuck itt on his bowes end:
'Thou hast beene traytor all thy liffe,
Which thing must have an ende.'
- 42 Robin pulled forth an Irish kniffe,
And nicked Sir Guy in the fface,
That hee was never on a woman borne
Cold tell who Sir Guye was. 170
- 43 Saies, 'Lye there, lye there, good Sir
Guye,
And with me be not wrothe;
If thou have had the worse stroakes at
my hand,
Thou shalt have the better cloathe.'
- 44 Robin did off his gowne of greene,
Sir Guy hee did it throwe;
And hee put on *that* capull-hyde,
That cladd him topp to toe.
- 45 'The bowe, the arrowes, and litle horne,
And with me now I 'le beare; 180
Ffor now I will goe to Barn[e]sdale,
To see how my men doe ffare.'
- 46 Robin sett Guyes horne to his mouth,
A lowd blast in it he did blow;
That beheard the sheriffe of Notting-
ham,
As he leaned under a lowe.⁵
- 47 'Hearken! hearken!' sayd the sheriffe,
'I heard noe tydings but good;
For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blowe,
For he hath slaine Robin Hoode. 190
- 48 'For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne
blow,
Itt blowes soe well in tyde,
For yonder comes *that* wighty yeoman,
Cladd in his capull-hyde.

¹ Of leaves hung on the rod?² heedless of.³ maid.⁴ backhand.⁵ hill.

- 49 'Come hither, thou good Sir Guy,
Aske of mee what thou wilt have':
'I'le none of thy gold,' sayes Robin Hood,
'Nor I'le none of itt have.
- 50 'But now I have slaine the master,' he
sayd,
'Let me goe strike the knave; 200
This is all the reward I aske,
Nor noe other will I have.'
- 51 'Thou art a madman,' said the shiriffe,
'Thou sholdest have had a knights
ffee;
Seeing thy asking [hath] beene soe badd,
Well granted it shall be.'
- 52 But Litle Iohn heard his master speake,
Well he knew that was his steven;¹
'Now shall I be loset,' quoth Litle Iohn,
'With Christs might in heaven.' 210
- 53 But Robin hee hyed him towards Litle
Iohn,
Hee thought hee wold loose him belive;
The sheriffe and all his companye
Fast after him did drive.
- 54 'Stand abacke! stand abackel!' sayd
Robin;
'Why draw you mee soe neere?
Itt was never the use in our countrye
One's shrift another shold heere.'
- 55 But Robin pulled forth an Irysh kniffe,
And losed Iohn hand and ffoote, 220
And gave him Sir Guyes bow in his hand,
And bade it be his boote.
- 56 But Iohn tooke Guyes bow in his hand —
His arrowes were rawstye by the
roote² —;
The sherriffe saw Litle Iohn draw a bow
And ffitle him to shoote.
- 57 Towards his house in Nottingham
He ffitd full fast away,
And soe did all his companye,
Not one behind did stay. 230
- 58 But he cold neither soe fast goe,
Nor away soe fast runn,
But Litle Iohn, with an arrow broade,
Did cleave his heart in twinn.
¹ voice. ² rusted on the end?

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

- 1 WHEN Robin Hood and Little John —
Down a down a down a down —
Went oer yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood bold to Little John,
'We have shot for many a pound.'
Hey down, a down, a down.
- 2 'But I am notable to shoot one shot more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me.' 10
- 3 Now Robin he is to fair Kirkly gone,
As fast as he can win;³
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.
- 4 And when he came to fair Kirkly-hall,
He knockd all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin her-
self
For to let bold Robin in.
- 5 'Will you please to sit down, cousin
Robin,' she said,
'And drink some beer with me?' 20
'No, I will neither eat nor drink,
Till I am blooded by thee.'
- 6 'Well, I have a room, cousin Robin,'
she said,
'Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein,
You blooded by me shall be.'
- 7 She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
While one drop of blood would run
down. 30
- 8 She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
Then did he bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next day at noon.
- 9 He then bethought him of a casement
there,
Thinking for to get down;
But was so weak he could not leap.
He could not get him down.
³ manage.

- 10 He then bethought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung low down to his knee; 40
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.
- 11 Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
'I fear my master is now near dead,
He blows so wearily.'
- 12 Then Little John to fair Kirkly is gone,
As fast as he can dree; 1
But when he came to Kirkly-hall,
He broke locks two or three: 50
- 13 Until he came bold Robin to see,
Then he fell on his knee;
'A boon, a boon,' cries Little John,
'Master, I beg of thee.'
- 14 'What is that boon,' said Robin Hood,
'Little John, [thou] begs of me?'
'It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall,
And all their nunnery.'
- 15 'Now nay, now nay,' quoth Robin Hood.
'That boon I'll not grant thee; 60
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.
- 16 'I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I'll let flee
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.
- 17 'Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet; 70
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.
- 18 'Let me have length and breadth
enough,
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood.'
- 19 These words they readily granted him,
Which did bold Robin please: 80
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirkleys.

1 endure, go.

 ROBIN HOOD RESCUING THE
WIDOW'S THREE SONS

- 1 THERE are twelve months in all the year
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year,
Is the merry month of May.
- 2 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met a silly old woman,
Was weeping on the way.
- 3 'What news? what news, thou silly old
woman?
What news hast thou for me?' 10
Said she, 'There's three squires in Not-
tingham town
To-day is condemned to die.'
- 4 'O have they parishes burnt?' he said,
'Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin,
Or with other men's wives have
lain?'
- 5 'They have no parishes burned, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have
lain.' 20
- 6 'O what have they done?' said bold
Robin Hood,
'I pray thee tell to me:'
'It's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee.'
- 7 'Dost thou not mind, old woman,' he said,
'Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body,' quoth bold
Robin Hood,
'You could not tell it in better time.'
- 8 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day, 30
And there he met with a silly old palmer,
Was walking along the highway.
- 9 'What news? what news, thou silly old
man?
What news, I do thee pray?'
Said he, 'Three squires in Nottingham
town
Are condemned to die this day.'

- 10 'Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
Come change thy apparel for mine ;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
Go drink it in beer or wine.' 40
- 11 'O thine apparel is good,' he said,
'And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh neer an old man to scorn.'
- 12 'Come change thy apparel with me, old churl,
Come change thy apparel with mine ;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine.'
- 13 Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown : 50
'The first bold bargain that I come at,
It shall make thee come down.'
- 14 Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patchd black, blew, and red ;
He thought no shame all the day long
To wear the bags of bread.
- 15 Then he put on the old man's breeks,¹
Was patchd from ballup² to side ;
'By the truth of my body,' bold Robin
can say,
'This man lov'd little pride.' 60
- 16 Then he put on the old man's hose,
Were patched from knee to wrist ;
'By the truth of my body,' said bold
Robin Hood,
'I'd laugh if I had any list.'³
- 17 Then he put on the old man's shoes,
Were patched both beneath and aboon ;
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
'It's good habit that makes a man.'
- 18 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down, 70
And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.
- 19 'O save, O save, O sheriff,' he said,
'O save, and you may see !
And what will you give to a silly old man
To-day will your hangman be ?'
- 20 'Some suits, some suits,' the sheriff he
said,
'Some suits I'll give to thee ;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thir-
teen
To-day's a hangman's fee.' 80
- 21 Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock to stone ;
'By the truth of my body,' the sheriff
he said,
'That's well jump't, thou nimble old
man.'
- 22 'I was neer a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intends to trade ;
But curst be he,' said bold Robin,
'That first a hangman was made.'
- 23 I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn ; 90
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef,
And a bag for my little small horn.
- 24 'I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth
For thee it blows little good.'
- 25 'O wind thy horn, thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt;
I wish that thou give such a blast
Till both thy eyes fall out.' 100
- 26 The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill ;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's men
Came riding over the hill.
- 27 The next loud blast that he did give,
He blew both loud and amain,
And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain.
- 28 'O who are you,' the sheriff he said
'Come tripping over the lee ?' , 110
'The're my attendants,' brave Robin
did say,
'They'll pay a visit to thee.'
- 29 They took the gallows from the slack,⁴
They set it in the glen,
They handg the proud sheriff on that,
Releas'd their own three men.

¹ breeches. ² front flap. ³ inclination.

⁴ low place.

HUGH OF LINCOLN.¹

- 1 FOUR and twenty bonny boys
Were playing at the ba,
And by it came him sweet Sir Hugh,
And he playd oer them a'.
10
- 2 He kicked the ba with his right foot,
And catchd it wi his knee,
And through-and-thro the Jew's window
He gard² the bonny ba flee.
- 3 He 's doen him to the Jew's castell,
And walkd it round about;
And there he saw the Jew's daughter,
At the window looking out.
10
- 4 'Throw down the ba, ye Jew's daughter,
Throw down the ba to me !'
'Never a bit,' says the Jew's daughter,
'Till up to me come ye.'
- 5 'How will I come up ? How can I
come up ?
How can I come to thee ?
For as ye did to my auld father,
The same ye 'll do to me.'
20
- 6 She 's gane till her father's garden,
And pu'd an apple red and green ;
'T was a' to wyle him sweet Sir Hugh,
And to entice him in.
- 7 She 's led him in through ae dark door,
And sae has she thro nine ;
She 's laid him on a dressing-table,
And stickit him like a swine.
- 8 And first came out the thick, thick
blood,
And syne³ came out the thin,
And syne came out the bonny heart's
blood;
There was nae mair within.
30
- 9 She 's rowd⁴ him in a cake o lead,
Bade him lie still and sleep ;
She 's thrown him in Our Lady's draw-
well,
Was fifty fathom deep.

¹ Or *The Jew's Daughter*. The thirteenth century chroniclers tell the story. Such fabrications directed against the Jews have persisted ever since, especially in Russia. Cf. Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*.

² made.

³ then.

⁴ rolled.

- 10 When bells were rung, and mass was
sung,
And a' the bairns came hame,
When every lady gat hame her son,
The Lady Maisry gat nane.
40
- 11 She 's taen her mantle her about,
Her coffer by the hand,
And she 's gane out to seek her son,
And wanderd oer the land.
- 12 She 's doen her to the Jew's castell,
Where a' were fast asleep :
'Gin ye be there, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak.'
- 13 She 's doen her to the Jew's gar-
den,
Thought he had been gathering fruit :
'Gin ye be there, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak.'
49
- 14 She heard Our Lady's deep draw-well,
Was fifty fathom deep :
'Whareer ye be, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak.'
- 15 'Gae hame, gae hame, my mither dear,
Prepare my winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The morn⁵ I will you meet.'
60
- 16 Now Lady Maisry is gane hame,
Made him a winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The dead corpse did her meet.
- 17 And a' the bells o merry Lincoln
Without men's hands were rung,
And a' the books o merry Lincoln
Were read without man's tongue,
And neer was such a burial
Sin Adam's days begun.
70

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN⁶

- 1 It fell about the Lammas time,
When the muir-men won their hay,
That the doughty Earl Douglas went
Into England to catch a prey.

⁵ tomorrow.

⁶ This battle was fought in 1388, and Froissart has a fine account of it in his *Chronicles* for that year. The ballad grew up presumably soon after. Our version is that supplied by James Hogg to Sir Walter Scott.

- 2 He chose the Gordons and the Graemes,
With the Lindsays light and gay;
But the Jardines wadna wi him ride,
And they rued it to this day.
- 3 And he has burnt the dales o Time
And part of Almonshire, ¹⁰
And three good towers on Roxbrugh
fells
He left them all on fire.
- 4 Then he marched up to Newcastle,
And rode it round about:
'O whae's the lord of this castle,
Or whae's the lady o't?'
5 But up spake proud Lord Piercy then,
And O but he spak hie!
'I am the lord of this castle,
And my wife's the lady gaye.' ²⁰
- 6 'If you are lord of this castle,
Sae weel it pleases me;
For ere I cross the border again
The ane of us shall die.'
- 7 He took a lang speir in his hand,
Was made of the metal free,
And for to meet the Douglas then
He rode most furiously.
- 8 But O how pale his lady lookd,
Frae off the castle wa, ³⁰
When down before the Scottish spear
She saw brave Piercy fa!
- 9 How pale and wan his lady lookd,
Frae off the castle hieght,
When she beheld her Piercy yield
To doughty Douglas' might!
- 10 'Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I should have had ye flesh and fell;
But your sword shall gae wi me.' ⁴⁰
- 11 'But gae you up to Otterburn,
And there wait dayes three,
And if I come not ere three days' end
A fause lord ca ye me.'
- 12 'The Otterburn's a bonny burn,
'Tis pleasant there to be,
But there is naught at Otterburn
To feed my men and me.
- 13 'The deer rins wild ower hill and dale,
The birds fly wild frae tree to tree, ⁵⁰
And there is neither bread nor kale
To fend my men and me.
- 14 'But I will stay at Otterburn,
Where you shall welcome be;
And if ye come not ere three days' end
A coward I'll ca thee.
- 15 'Then gae your ways to Otterburn,
And there wait dayes three;
And if I come not ere three days' end
A coward ye's ca me.' ⁶⁰
- 16 They lighted high on Otterburn,
Upon the bent¹ so brown,
They lighted high on Otterburn,
And threw their pallions² down.
- 17 And he that had a bonny boy
Sent his horses to grass,
And he that had not a bonny boy
His ain servant he was.
- 18 But up then spak a little page,
Before the peep of the dawn; ⁷⁰
'O waken ye, waken ye, my good lord,
For Piercy's hard at hand!'
- 19 'Ye lie, ye lie, ye loud liar,
Sae loud I hear ye lie!
The Piercy hadna men yestreen
To dight³ my men and me.
- 20 'But I have seen a dreary dream,
Beyond the isle o Sky;
I saw a dead man won the fight,
And I think that man was I.' ⁸⁰
- 21 He belted on his good broad-sword
And to the field he ran,
Where he met wi the proud Piercy,
And a' his goodly train.
- 22 When Piercy wi the Douglas met,
I wat he was right keen;
They swakked their swords till sair they
swat,
And the blood ran them between.
- 23 But Piercy wi his good broad-sword,
Was made o the metal free, ⁹⁰
Has wounded Douglas on the brow
Till backward he did flee.

¹ moor. ² pavilions. ³ clean up.

- 24 Then he calld on his little page,
And said, 'Run speedily,
And bring my ain dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery.'
- 25 Who, when he saw the Douglas bleed,
His heart was wonder wae:
'Now, by my sword, that haughty lord
Shall rue before he gae.' 100
- 26 'My nephew bauld,' the Douglas said,
'What boots the death of ane?
Last night I dreamed a dreary dream,
And I ken the day's thy ain.'¹
- 27 'I dreamd I saw a battle fought
Beyond the isle o' Sky,
When lo! a dead man wan the field,
And I thought that man was I.
- 28 'My wound is deep, I fain wad sleep,
Nae mair I'll fighting see; 110
Gae lay me in the broken bush
That grows on yonder lee.
- 29 'But tell na ane of my brave men
That I lye bleeding wan,
But let the name of Douglas still
Be shouted in the van.
- 30 'And bury me here on this lee,
Beneath the blooming briar,
And never let a mortal ken
A kindly Scot lyes here.' 120
- 31 He liftit up that noble lord,
Wi the saut tear in his ee,
And hid him in the broken bush,
On yonder lily lee.
- 32 The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinters flew,
But mony gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scotsman slew.
- 33 Sir Hugh Montgomery he rode
Thro all the field in sight, 130
And loud the name of Douglas still
He urg'd wi a' his might.
- 34 The Gordons good, in English blood
They steeped their hose and shoon,
The Lindsays flew like fire about,
Till a' the fray was doon.
- 35 When stout Sir Hugh wi Piercy met,
I wat he was right fain;
They swakked their swords till sair they
swat,
And the blood ran down like rain. 140
- 36 'O yield thee, Piercy,' said Sir Hugh,
'O yield, or ye shall die!'
'Fain wad I yield,' proud Piercy said,
'But neer to loun² like thee.'
- 37 'Thou shalt not yield to knave nor
loun,
Nor shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the broken bush
That grows on yonder lee.'
- 38 'I will not yield to bush or brier,
Nor will I yield to thee; 150
But I will yield to Lord Douglas,
Or Sir Hugh Montgomery.'
- 39 When Piercy knew it was Sir Hugh,
He fell low on his knee,
But soon he rais'd him up again,
Wi mickle courtesy.
- 40 He left not an Englishman on the field
That he hadna either killd or taen
Ere his heart's blood was cauld.

CHEVY CHASE³

- 1 GOD prosper long our noble king,
our liffes and saftyes all!
A woefull hunting once there did
in Chevy Chase befall.
- 2 To drive the deere with hound and
horne
Erle Pearcey took the way:
The child may rue that is unborne the
hunting of that day!

¹ fellow.² Probably founded remotely on the same happening as *Otterburn*. This is the ballad that stirred Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie* to remark: "Certainly I must confesse my own barbarousness. I never heard the olde song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart mooved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind cronder [fiddler], with no rougher voyce then rude stile: which, being so evill apperelled in the dust and cob-webbes of that uncivill age, what would it worke trymmed in the gorgeons eloquence of Pindar!" Addison's appreciation of it is in Nos. 70 and 74 of the *Spectator*.³ own.

- 3 The stout Erle of Northumberland
a vow to God did make 10
His pleasure in the Scottissh woods
three sommers days to take,
- 4 The cheefest harts in Chevy C[h]ase
to kill and beare away:
These tydings to Erle Douglas came
in Scotland, where he lay.
- 5 Who sent Erle Percy present word
he would prevent his sport;
The English erle, not fearing that,
did to the woods resort, 30
- 6 With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
to ayme their shafts arright.
- 7 The gallant greyhound[s] swiftly ran
to chase the fallow deere;
On Munday they began to hunt,
ere daylight did appeare.
- 8 And long before high noone the had
a hundred fat buckes slaine; 30
Then having dined, the drovyers went
to rouze the deare againe.
- 9 The bowmen mustered on the hills,
well able to endure;
Their backsids all with speciall care
that day were guarded sure.
- 10 The hounds ran swiftly through the
woods
the nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
an echo shrill did make. 40
- 11 Lord Percy to the querry went
to vieu the tender deere;
Quoth he, 'Erle Douglas promised once
this day to meete me heere;
- 12 'But if I thought he wold not come,
noe longer wold I stay.'
With *that* a brave younge gentlman
thus to the erle did say:
- 13 'Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
hys men in armour bright; 50
Full twenty hundred Scottissh speres
all marching in our sight.
- 14 'All men of pleasant Tivydale,
fast by the river Tweede:'
'O ceaze your sports!' Erle Percy said,
'and take your bowes with speede.
- 15 'And now with me, my countrymen,
your courage forth advance!
For there was never champion yett,
in Scotland nor in Ffrance, 60
- 16 '*That* ever did on horsbacke come,
[but], and if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
with him to break a spere.'
- 17 Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
whose armor shone like gold.
- 18 'Shew me,' sayd hee, 'whose men you
bee
that hunt soe boldly heere, 70
That without my consent doe chase
and kil my fallow deere.'
- 19 The first man *that* did answer make
was noble Percy hee,
Who said, 'Wee list not to declare
nor shew whose men wee bee;
- 20 'Yett wee will spend our dearest blod
thy cheefest harts to slay.'
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
and thus in rage did say: 80
- 21 'Ere thus I will outbraved bee,
one of us tow shall dye;
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.
- 22 'But trust me, Percye, pittye it were,
and great offence, to kill
Then any of these our guiltlesse men,
for they have done none ill.
- 23 'Let thou and I the battell trye,
and set our men aside: 90
'Accurst bee [he!]' Erle Percye sayd,
'by whome it is denyed.'
- 24 Then stept a gallant squire forth —
Witherington was his name —
Who said, 'I wold not have it told
To Henery our king, for shame,

- 25 'That ere my captaine fought on foote,
and I stand looking on.
You bee two Erles,' quoth Withering-
ton,
'and I a squier alone; 100
- 26 'I'le doe the best *that* doe I may,
while I have power to stand;
While I have power to weeld my sword,
I'le fight with hart and hand.'
- 27 Our English archers bent their bowes;
their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
full foure score Scotts the slew.
- 28 To drive the deere with hound and
horne,
Dauglas bade on the bent; 110
Two captaines moved with mickle
might,
their speres to shivers went.
- 29 They closed full fast on everye side,
noe slacknes there was found,
But many a gallant gentleman
lay gasping on the ground.
- 30 O Christ! it was great greeve to see
how eche man chose his spere,
And how the blood out of their breasts
did gush like water cleare. 120
- 31 At last these two stout erles did meet,
like captaines of great might;
Like lyons woode¹ they layd on lode;²
the made a cruell fight.
- 32 The fought untill they both did sweat,
with swords of tempered steele,
Till blood downe their cheekes like
raine
the trickling downe did feelee.
- 33 'O yeeld thee, Pearcy!' Douglas
sayd,
'And in faith I will thee bringe 130
Where thou shall high advanced bee
by Iames our Scottish king.
- 34 'Thy ransome I will freely give,
and this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious *knight*
[that ever I did see.]'
- 35 'Noe, Douglas!' quoth Erle Percy then,
'thy profer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelde to any Scott
that ever yett was borne!' 140
- 36 With *that* there came an arrow keene,
out of an English bow,
Which stroke Erle Douglas on the brest
a deepe and deadly blow.
- 37 Who never sayd more words than these;
'Fight on, my merry men all!
For why, my life is att [an] end,
lord Pearcy sees my fall.'
- 38 Then leaving liffe, Erle Pearcy tooke
the dead man by the hand; 150
Who said, 'Erle Dowglas, for thy life,
wold I had lost my land!
- 39 'O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed
for sorrow for thy sake,
For sure, a more redoubted *knight*
mischance cold³ never take.'
- 40 A *knight* amongst the Scotts there was
which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in hart did vow revenge
upon the Lord Pearcy. 160
- 41 Sir Hugh Mountgomerye was he called,
who, with a spere full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
ran feirely through the fight,
- 42 And past the English archers all,
without all dread or feare,
And through Erle Percyes body then
he thrust his hatfull spere.
- 43 With such a vehement force and might
his body he did gore, 170
The staff ran through the other side
a large cloth-yard and more.
- 44 Thus did both those nobles dye,
whose courage none cold staine;
An English archer then *perceived*
the noble erle was slaine.
- 45 He had [a] good bow in his hand,
made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
to the hard head haled hee. 180

¹ mad.² load, i.e., they laid on heartily.³ could.

- 46 Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye
his shaft full right he sett;
The grey-goose-winge *that* was there-on
in his harts bloode was wett.
- 47 This fight from breake of day did last
till setting of the sun,
For when the rung the evening-bell
the battele scarce was done.
- 48 With stout Erle Percy there was slaine
Sir Iohn of Egerton, 190
Sir Robert Harcliffe and Sir William,
Sir Iames, that bold barron.
- 49 And with Sir George and Sir Iames,
both *knights* of good account,
Good Sir Raphe Rebbye there was slaine,
whose prowesse did surmount.
- 50 For Witherington needs must I wayle
as one in dolefull dumps,
For when his leggs were smitten of,
he fought upon his stumps. 200
- 51 And with Erle Dowglas there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
And Sir Charles Morrell, *that* from feelde
one foote wold never flee;
- 52 Sir Roger Hever of Harcliffe tow,
his sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lamwell, well esteemed,
but saved he cold not bee.
- 53 And the Lord Maxwell, in like case,
with Douglas he did dye; 210
Of twenty hundred Scottish speeres,
scarce fifty-five did flye.
- 54 Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
went home but fifty-three;
The rest in Chevy Chase were slaine,
under the greenwoode tree.
- 55 Next day did many widdowes come
their husbands to bewaile;
They washt their wounds in brinish
teares,
but all wold not prevayle. 220
- 56 Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple blood,
the bore with them away;
They kist them dead a thousand times
ere the were cladd in clay.

- 57 The newes was brought to Eddenbor-
row,
where Scottlands *king* did rayne,
That brave Erle Douglas soddainlye
was with an arrow slaine.
- 58 'O heavy newes!' King Iames can say;
'Scotland may wittnesse bee 230
I have not any captaine more
of such account as hee.'
- 59 Like tydings to King Henery came,
within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
was slaine in Chevy Chase.
- 60 'Now God be with him!' said our *king*,
'sith it will noe better bee;
I trust I have within my realme
five hundred as good as hee. 240
- 61 'Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland
say
but I will vengeance take,
And be revenged on them all
for brave Erle Percyes sake.'
- 62 This vow the *king* did well performe
after on Humble-downe;
In one day fifty *knights* were slayne,
with lords of great renowne.
- 63 And of the rest, of small account,
did many hundreds dye: 250
Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy
Chase,
made by the Erle Percy.
- 64 God save our *king*, and blesse this land
with plentye, ioy, and peace,
And grant henceforth *that* foule debate
twixt noble men may ceaze!

JOHNIE ARMSTRONG¹

- 1 THERE dwelt a man in faire Westmer-
land,
Ionnè Armstrong men did him call,
He had nither lands nor rents coming in,
Yet he kept eight score men in his
hall.

¹ This ballad is historical. In 1530 James V of Scotland cleaned up the Border, and among other outlaws hanged John Armstrong. This English version shifts Johnie's residence to Westmoreland.

- 2 He had horse and harness for them all,
Goodly steeds were all milke-white;
O the golden bands an about their necks,
And their weapons, they were all alike.
- 3 Newes then was brought unto the king
That there was sick a won¹ as hee, 10
That livèd lyke a bold out-law,
And robbèd all the north country.
- 4 The king he writt an a letter then,
A letter which was large and long;
He signèd it with his owne hand,
And he promised to doe him no wrong.
- 5 When this letter came Ionnè untill,
His heart it was as blythe as birds on
the tree:
'Never was I sent for before any king,
My father, my grandfather, nor none
but mee. 20
- 6 'And if wee goe the king before,
I would we went most orderly;
Every man of you shall have his scarlet
cloak,
Laced with silver laces three.
- 7 'Every won of you shall have his vel-
vett coat,
Laced with sillver lace so white;
O the golden bands an about your necks,
Black hatts, white feathers, all alyke.'
- 8 By the morrow morninge at ten of the
clock, 29
Towards Edenbrough gon was hee,
And with him all his eight score men;
Good lord, it was a goodly sight for
to see!
- 9 When Ionnè came befower the king,
He fell downe on his knee;
'O pardon, my soveraine leige,' he said,
'O pardon my eight score men and
mee!'
- 10 'Thou shalt have no pardon, thou tray-
tor strong,
For thy eight score men nor thee;
For to-morrow morning by ten of the
clock,
Both thou and them shall hang on the
gallow-tree.' 40
- 11 But Ionnè looke'd over his left shoulder,
Good Lord, what a greivous look
looked hee!
Saying, 'Asking grace of a graceles
face —
Why there is none for you nor me.'
- 12 But Ionnè had a bright sword by his side
And it was made of the mettle so free,
That had not the king stept his foot aside,
He had smitten his head from his
faire bodde.
- 13 Saying, 'Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine; 50
For rather than men shall say we were
hange'd,
Let them report how we were slaine.'
- 14 Then, God wott, faire Eddenburrrough
rose,
And so besett poore Ionnè rounde,
That fowerscore and tenn of Ionnes
best men
Lay gasping all upon the ground.
- 15 Then like a mad man Ionnè laide about,
And like a mad man then fought hee,
Untill a falce Scott came Ionnè behinde,
And runn him through the faire
boddee. 60
- 16 Saying, 'Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For I will stand by and bleed but awhile,
And then will I come and fight againe.'
- 17 Newes then was brought to young Ionnè
Armestrong,
As he stood by his nurses knee,
Whovowed if ere he live'd fortobe a man,
O the treacherous Scots revengd
hee 'd be.

MARY HAMILTON²

- 1 Word's gane to the kitchen,
And word's gane to the ha,
That Marie Hamilton gangs wi bairn
To the highest Stewart of a'.

¹ There may be some slight historical foundation to this famous ballad. See the discussion by Child, m, 381, and Andrew Lang, *Blackwood's Magazine*, Sept. 1, 1895, p. 381. This version, the oldest, was first printed in 1824.

² such a one.

- 2 He's courted her in the kitchen,
He's courted her in the ha,
He's courted her in the laigh¹ cellar,
And that was warst of a'.
- 3 She's tyed it in her apron
And she's thrown it in the sea; ¹⁰
Says, 'Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe!
You'll neer get mair o me.'
- 4 Down then cam the auld queen,
Goud tassels tying her hair:
'O Marie, where's the bonny wee babe
That I heard greet sae sair?'
- 5 'There was never a babe intill my room,
As little designs to be;
It was but a touch o my sair side,
Come oer my fair bodie.' ²⁰
- 6 'O Marie, put on your robes o black,
Or else your robes o brown,
For ye maun gang wi me the night,
To see fair Edinbro town.'
- 7 'I winna put on my robes o black,
Nor yet my robes o brown;
But I'll put on my robes o white,
To shine through Edinbro town.'
- 8 When she gaed up the Cannogate,
She lauchd loud laughters three; ³⁰
But whan she cam down the Cannogate
The tear blinded her ee.
- 9 When she gaed up the Parliament stair,
The heel cam aff her shее;
And lang or she cam down again
She was condemn'd to dee.
- 10 When she cam down the Cannogate,
The Cannogate sae free,
Many a ladie lookd oer her window,
Weeping for this ladie. ⁴⁰
- 11 'Ye need nae weep for me,' she says,
'Ye need nae weep for me;
For had I not slain mine own sweet babe,
This death I wadna dee.
- 12 'Bring me a bottle of wine,' she says,
'The best that eer ye hae,
That I may drink to my weil-wishers,
And they may drink to me.
- 13 'Here's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the main; ⁵⁰
Let them never let on to my father and
mother
But what I'm coming hame.
- 14 'Here's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the sea;
Let them never let on to my father and
mother
That I cam here to dee.
- 15 'Oh little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee. ⁶⁰
- 16 'Oh little did my father think,
The day he held up me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.
- 17 'Last night I washd the queen's feet,
And gently laid her down;
And a' the thanks I've gotten the
nicht
To be hangd in Edinbro town!
- 18 'Last nicht there was four Maries,
The nicht there 'l be but three; ⁷⁰
There was Marie Seton, and Marie
Beton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me.'

CAPTAIN CAR²

- 1 It befell at Martynmas,
When wether waxed colde,
Captaine Care said to his men,
We must go take a holde.
- Syck, sike, and to-towe sike,³
And sike and like to die;
The sikest nighte that ever I abode,
God lord have mercy on me!
- 2 'Haille, master, and wether⁴ you will,
And wether ye like it best'; ¹⁰
'To the castle of Creerynbroghe,
And there we will take our reste.'

¹ Also called *Edom o Gordon* from the historical original, Adam Gordon, who in 1571 as deputy-lieutenant for Mary Queen of Scots thus burnt the Forbes (not Hamilton) hold of Towie.

² too too sick.

³ whither.

¹ low.

- 3 'I knowe wher is a gay castle,
Is builded of lyme and stone;
Within their is a gay ladie,
Her lord is riden and gone.'
- 4 The ladie she lend on her castle-walle,
She loked upp and downe;
There was she ware of an host of men,
Come riding to the towne. 20
- 5 'Se yow, my meri men all,
And se yow what I see?
Yonder I see a host of men,
I muse who they bee.'
- 6 She thought he had ben her wed lord,
As he comd riding home;
Then was it traitur Captaine Care,
The lord of Ester-towne.
- 7 They wer no soner at supper sett,
Then after said the grace, 30
Or Captaine Care and all his men
Wer lighte aboute the place.
- 8 'Gyve ouer thi howsse, thou lady gay,
And I will make the a bande;¹
To-nighte thou shall ly within my armes,
To-morrowe thou shall ere² my lande.'
- 9 Then bespake the eldest sonne,
That was both whitt and redde:
'O mother dere, geve over your howsse,
' Or elles we shalbe deade.' 40
- 10 'I will not geve over my hous,' she saithe,
'Not for feare of my lyffe;
It shalbe talked throughout the land,
The slaughter of a wyffe.
- 11 'Fetch me my pestilett,³
And charge me my gonne,
That I may shott at yonder bloody butcher,
The lord of Easter-towne.'
- 12 Styfly vpon her wall she stode,
And lett the pelletes flee; 50
But then she myst the bloody bucher,
And she slew other three.
- 13 '[I will] not geve over my hous,' she saithe,
'Netheir for lord nor lowne;
Nor yet for traitur Captaine Care,
The lord of Easter-towne.
- 14 'I desire of Captaine Care,
And all his bloddy band,
That he would save my eldest sonne,
The eare of all my lande.' 60
- 15 'Lap him in a shete,' he sayth,
'And let him downe to me,
And I shall take him in my armes,
His waran⁴ shall I be.'
- 16 The captayne sayd unto him selfe:
Wyth sped, before the rest,
He cut his tonge out of his head,
His hart out of his brest.
- 17 He lapt them in a handkerchef,
And knet it of knotes three, 70
And cast them over the castell-wall,
At that gay ladye.
- 18 'Fye vpon the, Captayne Care,
And all thy bloddy band!
For thou hast slayne my eldest sonne,
The ayre of all my land.'
- 19 Then bespake the yongest sonne,
That sat on the nurses knee,
Sayth, 'Mother gay, geve over your house;
It smoldereth me.' 80
- 20 'I wold geve my gold,' she saith,
'And so I wolde my flee,
For a blaste of the westryn wind,
To dryve the smoke from thee.
- 21 'Fy vpon the, John Hamleton,
That ever I paid the hyre!
For thou hast broken my castle-wall,
And kyndled in the fyre.'
- 22 The lady gate⁵ to her close parler,
The fire fell aboute her head; 90
She toke vp her children thre,
Seth, 'Babes, we are all dead.'
- 23 Then bespake the hye steward,
That is of hye degree;
Saith, 'Ladie gay, you are in close,⁶
Wether ye fighte or flee.'
- 24 Lord Hamleton dremd in his dream,
In Carvall where he laye,
His halle were all of fyre,
His ladie slayne or daye.' 100

1 compact.

2 inherit.

3 pistol.

4 warrant. 5 got, went. 6 enclosed. 7 before day.

25 'Busk and bowne,¹ my mery men all,
Even and go ye with me;
For I dremd that my haal was on fyre,
My lady slayne or day.'

26 He buskt him and bownd hym,
And like a worthi knight;
And when he saw his hall burning,
His harte was no dele lighte.

27 He sett a trumpett till his mouth,
He blew as it plesd his grace; 110
Twenty score of Hamlentons
Was light aboute the place.

28 'Had I knowne as much yesternighte
As I do to-daye,
Captaine Care and all his men
Should not have gone so quite.

29 'Fye vpon the, Captaine Care,
And all thy blody bande!
Thou haste slayne my lady gay,
More wurth then all thy launde. 120

30 'If thou had ought² eny ill will,' he saith,
'Thou shoulde have taken my lyffe,
And have saved my children thre,
All and my lovesome wyffe.'

THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY³

1 Ye Highlands, and ye Lawlands,
Oh where have you been?
They have slain the Earl of Murray,
And they layd him on the green.

2 'Now was be to thee, Huntly!
And wherefore did you sae?
I bade you bring him wi you,
But forbade you him to slay.'

3 He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring; 10
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he might have been a king!

4 He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the ba;
And the bonny Earl of Murray
Was the flower amang them a'.

5 He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the glove;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he was the Queen's love! 20

6 Oh lang will his lady
Look oer the castle Down,
Eer she see the Earl of Murray
Come sounding thro the town!
Eer she, etc.

KINMONT WILLIE⁴

1 O HAVE ye na heard o the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o the keen Lord
Scroop?
How they hae taen bauld Kinmont
Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up?

2 Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont
taen,
Wi eight score in his companie.

3 They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back; 10
They guarded him, fivesome on each
side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-
rack.

4 They led him thro the Liddel-rack,
And also thro the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroope's com-
mands.

5 'My hands are tied, but my tongue is
free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the border law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?' 20

6 'Now haud thy tongue, thou rank
reiver!⁵
There's never a Scot shall set ye
free;
Before ye cross my castle-yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o me.'

¹ Arm and prepare.

² owed.

³ The handsome James Stewart, Earl of Murray, was slain in 1592.

⁴ This ballad, founded on actual events of about 1596, has been much touched up by Sir Walter Scott.

⁵ robber.

- 7 'Fear na ye that, my lord,' quo Willie;
'By the faith o my bodie, Lord
Scroop,' he said,
'I never yet lodged in a hostelry
But I paid my lawing¹ before I gaed.'
- 8 Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha² where that he lay,
That Lord Scroope has taen the Kin-
mont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.
- 9 He has taen the table wi his hand,
He garrd the red wine spring on hie;
'Now Christ's curse on my head,' he
said,
'But avenged of Lord Scroop I'll be!
- 10 'O is my basnet³ a widow's curch?⁴
Or my lance a wand of the willow-
tree?
Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand?
That an English lord should lightly⁵
me. 40
- 11 'And have they taen him Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide,
And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch
Is keeper here on the Scottish side?
- 12 'And have they een taen him Kinmont
Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?
- 13 'O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none, 50
I would slight⁶ Carlisle castell high,
Tho it were builded of marble-stone.
- 14 'I would set that castell in a low,⁷
And sloken⁸ it with English blood;
There's nevir a man in Cumberland
Should ken where Carlisle castell
stood.
- 15 'But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should
be,
I'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall
be!' 60
- 16 He has calld him forty marchmen
bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, calld
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.
- 17 He has calld him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buc-
cleuch,
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,⁹
And gleuves of green, and feathers
blue.
- 18 There were five and five before them a',
Wi hunting-horns and bugles bright;¹⁰
And five and five came wi Buccleuch,
Like Warden's men, arrayed for fight.
- 19 And five and five like a mason-gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five like broken men;¹¹
And so they reached the Woodhouse-
lee.
- 20 And as we crossed the Bateable Land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o men that we met wi,
Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde! 80
- 21 'Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?'
Quo fause Sakelde; 'come tell to
me!'
'We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespassd on the Scots countrie.'
- 22 'Where be ye gaun, ye marshal-men?'
Quo fause Sakelde; 'come tell to me
true!'
'We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi the bauld Buc-
cleuch.'
- 23 'Where are ye gaun, ye mason-lads,
Why a' your ladders lang and hie?'
'We gang to herry¹¹ a corbie's nest, 90
That wons¹² not far frae Woodhouse-
lee.'
- 24 'Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?'
Quo fause Sakelde; 'come tell to
me!'
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the never a word o lear¹³ had he.

¹ reckoning. ² Hall. ³ helmet. ⁴ kerchief.
headress. ⁵ scorn. ⁶ destroy. ⁷ flame. ⁸ quench.

⁹ armor on shoulder. ¹⁰ outlaws. ¹¹ harry, rob.
¹² dwells. ¹³ learning, instruction.

- 25 'Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row¹-footed outlaws, stand!' quo he;
The neer a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust the lance thro his faulse
bodie. 100
- 26 Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we
crossd;
The water was great, and meikle of spait,²
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.
- 27 And when we reached the Staneshaw-
bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird garrd³ leave our
steeds,
For fear that they should stampand nie.
- 28 And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw; 110
But 't was wind and weet, and fire and
sleet,
When we came beneath the castelwa.
- 29 We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the
wa;
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
To mount the first before us a'.
- 30 He has taen the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead:
'Had there not been peace between our
lands, 119
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed.
- 31 'Now sound out, trumpets!' quo Buc-
cleuch;
'Let's waken Lord Seroope right
merrilie!'
Then loud the Warden's trumpets blew
'O whae dare meddle wi me?'
- 32 Then speedilie to wark we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole thro a sheet of lead,
And so we wan to the castel-ha.
- 33 They thought King James and a' his
men 129
Had won the house wi bow and speir:
It was but twenty Scots and ten
That put a thousand in sic a stear!⁴
¹ Rough. ² in high flood. ³ caused us to. ⁴ stir.
- 34 Wi coulters⁵ and wi forehammers,
We garrd the bars bang merrilie,
Untill we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie.
- 35 And when we cam to the lower prison,
Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie,
'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou 's to die?'
- 36 'O I sleep saft, and I wake aft, 141
It's lang since sleeping was fleyd⁶
frae me;
Gie my service back to my wyfe and
bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speer⁷ for
me.'
- 37 Then Red Rowan has hente⁸ him up,
The starkest men in Teviotdale:
'Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Seroope I take fare-
well.
- 38 'Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord
Seroope!
My gude Lord Seroope, farewell!' he
cried;
'I'll pay you for my lodging-maill⁹ 150
When first we meet on the border-
side.'
- 39 Then shoulder high, with shout and
cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns¹⁰ playd
clang.
- 40 'O mony a time,' quo Kinmont Wil-
lie,
'I have ridden horse baith wild and
wood;¹¹
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have neer bestrode.
- 41 'And mony a time,' quo Kinmont
Willie, 161
'I've pricked a horse out oure the
furs;¹²
But since the day I backed a steed
I nevir wore sic cumbrous spurs.'
- ⁵ the blade before the share of a plough.
⁶ frightened. ⁷ inquire. ⁸ taken.
⁹ rent. ¹⁰ irons. ¹¹ mad.
¹² over the furrows.

42 We scarce had won the Staneshaw-
bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam wi the keen Lord Seroope along.

43 Buccleuch has turned to Eden Water,
Even where it flowd frae bank to
brim, 170
And he has plunged in wi a' his band,
And safely swam them thro the
stream.

44 He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Seroope his glove flung
he:
'If ye like na my visit in merry Eng-
land,
In fair Scotland come visit me!'

45 All sore astonished stood Lord Seroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew¹ his eyes
When thro the water they had gane.

46 'He is either himsell a devil frae hell, 181
Or else his mother a witch maun
be;
I wad na have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'

THE BONNIE HOUSE O AIRLIE²

1 It fell on a day, and a bonny summer
day,
When corn grew green and yellow,
That there fell out a great dispute
Between Argyll and Airly.

2 Argyll has raisd an hundred men,
An hundred men, and so many,
And he is away by the back of Dun-
keld,
For to plunder the bonny house of
Airly.

3 Lady Margaret looks oer her bower-
window,
And O but she looks weary! 10
And there she spied the great Argyll,
Coming to plunder the bonny house of
Airly.

4 'Come down, come down, Lady Mar-
gret,' he said,
'Come down, and kiss me fairly :'
'O I will not kiss the great Argyll,
If he should not leave a standing
stone in Airly.'

5 He hath taken her by the left shoulder,
Says, 'Lady, where lyes thy dowry ?'
'It's up and it's down by the bonny
bank-side,
Amongst the planting of Airly.' 20

6 They have sought it up, they have
sought it down,
They have sought it both late and early,
And they have found it in the bonny
plumb-tree
That shines on the bowling-green of
Airly.

7 He hath taken her by the middle so
small,
And O but she lookd weary !
He hath laid her down by the bonny
burn-side,
Till he hath plundered the bonny
house of Airly.

8 'If my good lord were at home this night,
As he is with Prince Charly, 30
Nouter you nor no Scottish lord
Durst have set a foot on the bowling-
green of Airly.

9 'Ten bonny sons I have born unto him,
The eleventh neer saw his daddy;
Although I had an hundred more,
I would give them all to Prince
Charly.'

THE BARON OF BRACKLEY³

1 INVEREY cam down Deeside, whistlin
and playin,
He was at brave Braikley's yett⁴ ere it
was dawin.⁵

2 He rappit fu loudly an wi a great roar,
Cried, 'Cum down, cum down, Braikley,
and open the door.

¹ Various tragedies in the history of the Brackley family have supplied the material for this.

² trust.

³ The Earl of Argyle sacked and burnt Airlie in 1640.

⁴ gate.

⁵ dawning.

- 3 'Are ye sleepin, Baronne, or are ye wakin?
There's sharpe swords at your yett, will gar your blood spin.
- 4 'Open the yett, Braikley, and lat us within,
Till we on the green turf gar your bluid rin.'
- 5 Out spak the brave baronne, owre the castell-wa:
'Are ye cum to spulyie¹ and plunder mi ha?¹⁰
- 6 'But gin ye be gentlemen, licht and cum in:
Gin ye drink o my wine, ye'll nae gar² my bluid spin.
- 7 'Gin ye be hir'd widifus,³ ye may gang by,
Ye may gang to the lawlands and steal their fat ky.⁴
- 8 'Ther spulyie like rievvers o wyld ketrin clan,⁵
Who plunder unsparing baith houses and lan.
- 9 'Gin ye be gentlemen, licht an cum [in],
Ther's meat an drink i my ha for every man.
- 10 'Gin ye be hir'd widifus, ye may gang by,
Gang doun to the lawlands, and steal horse and ky.²⁰
- 11 Up spak his ladie, at his bak where she lay,
'Get up, get up, Braikley, and be not afraid;
The'r but young hir'd widifus wi belted plaids.'
- 12 'Cum kiss me, mi Peggy, I'll nae langer stay,
For I will go out and meet Inverey.
- 13 'But haud your tongue, Peggy, and mak nae sic din,
For yon same hir'd widifus will prove themselves men.'
- 14 She called on her marys,⁶ they cam to her hand;
Cries, 'Bring me your rocks,⁷ lassies, we will them command.
- 15 'Get up, get up, Braikley, and turn bak your ky,³⁰
Or me an mi women will them defy.
- 16 'Cum forth then, mi maidens, and show them some play;
We'll ficht them, and shortly the cowards will fly.
- 17 'Gin I had a husband, whereas I hae nane,
He woud nae ly i his bed and see his ky taen.
- 18 'Ther's four-and-twenty milk-whit calves, twal⁸ o them ky,
In the woods o Glentanner, it's ther thei a' ly.
- 19 'Ther's goat i the Etnach, and sheep o the brae,
Ana' will be plunderd by young Inverey.'
- 20 'Now haud your tongue, Peggy, and gie me a gun,⁴⁰
Ye'll see me gae furth, but I'll never cum in.
- 21 'Call mi brother William, mi unkl also,
Mi cousin James Gordon; we'll mount and we'll go.'
- 22 When Braikley was ready and stood i the closs,
He was the bravest baronne that eer mounted horse.
- 23 When all wer assembld o the castell green,
No man like brave Braikley was ther to be seen.
- 24 'Turn bak, brother William, ye are a bridegroom;
- 25 'Wi bonnie Jean Gordon, the maid o the mill;
O sichin⁹ and sobbin she'll soon get her fill.⁵⁰

⁶ maids. ⁷ distaffs. ⁸ twelve. ⁹ sighing.

[¹ spoll. ² make. ³ gallows-birds. ⁴ kine.
⁵ meal like thieves of the wild robber clans.

26 'I'm no coward, brother, 't is kend I'm
a man;
I'll fight i your quarrel as lang's I can
stand.

27 'I'll fight, my dear brother, wi heart
and gude will,
And so will young Harry that lives at
the mill.

28 'But turn, mi dear brother, and nae
langer stay:
What'll cum o your ladie, gin Braikley
thei slay?

29 'What'll cum o your ladie and bonnie
young son?
O what'll cum o them when Braikley is
gone?' 58

30 'I never will turn: do you think I will fly?
But here I will fight, and here I will die.'

31 'Strik dogs,' crys Inverey, 'and fight
till ye're slayn,
For we are four hundreded, ye are but
four men.

32 'Strik, strik, ye proud boaster, your
honour is gone,
Your lands we will plunder, your castell
we'll burn.'

33 At the head o the Etnach the battel began,
At Little Auchoilzie thei killd the first
man.

34 First thei killd ane, and soon they killd
twa,
Thei killd gallant Braikley, the flour o
them a'.

35 Thei killd William Gordon, and James
o the Knox,
And brave Alexander, the flour o Glen-
muick. 70

36 What sichin and moaning was heard i
the glen,
For the Baronne o Braikley, who basely
was slayn!

37 'Cam ye bi the castell, and was ye in
there?
Saw ye pretty Peggy tearing her hair?'

38 'Yes, I cam by Braikley, and I gaed in
there,
And there [saw] his ladie braiding her
hair.

39 'She was rantin, and dancin, and singin
for joy,
And vowin that nicht she woud feest
Inverey.

40 'She eat wi him, drank wi him, welcomd
him in,
Was kind to the man that had slayn her
baronne.' 80

41 Up spake the son on the nourice's knee,
'Gin I live to be a man, revenged I'll be.'

42 Ther's dool i the kitchin, and mirth i
the ha,
The Baronne o Braikley is dead and awa.

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

1 HIE upon Hielands,
and laigh¹ upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
rode out on a day.

2 He saddled, he bridled,
and gallant rode he,
And hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he.

3 Out came his mother dear,
greeting fu sair,² 10
And out cam his bonnie bryde,
riving her hair.

4 'The meadow lies green,
the corn is unshorn,
But Bonnie George Campbell
will never return.'

5 Saddled and bridled
and bootied rode he,
A plume in his helmet,
a sword at his knee. 20

6 But toom³ cam his saddle,
all bloody to see,
Oh, hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he!

¹ low. ² Weeping full sore. ³ empty.

BEWICK AND GRAHAM¹

- 1 OLD Grahame [he] is to Carlisle gone,
Where Sir Robert Bewick there met
he;
In arms to the wine they are gone,
And drank till they were both merry.
- 2 Old Grahame he took up the cup,
And said, 'Brother Bewick, here's to
thee;
And here's to our two sons at home,
For they live best in our country.'
- 3 'Nay, were thy son as good as mine,
And of some books he could but
read,
With sword and buckler by his side,
To see how he could save his head,
- 4 'They might have been calld two bold
brethren
Where ever they did go or ride;
They might [have] been calld two bold
brethren,
They might have crackd the Border-
side.
- 5 'Thy son is bad, and is but a lad,
And bully² to my son cannot be;
For my son Bewick can both write and
read,
And sure I am that cannot he.'
- 6 'I put him to school, but he would not
learn,
I bought him books, but he would not
read;
But my blessing he's never have
Till I see how his hand can save his
head.'
- 7 Old Grahame called for an account,
And he askd what was for to pay;
There he paid a crown, so it went round,
Which was all for good wine and hay.
- 8 Old Grahame is into the stable gone,
Where stood thirty good steeds and
three;
He's taken his own steed by the head,
And home rode he right wantonly.
- 9 When he came home, there did he espy,
A loving sight to spy or see,
There did he espy his own three sons,
Young Christy Grahame, the fore-
most was he.
- 10 There did he espy his own three sons,
Young Christy Grahame, the fore-
most was he:
'Where have you been all day, father,
That no counsel you would take by
me?'
- 11 'Nay, I have been in Carlisle town,
Where Sir Robert Bewick there met
me;
He said thou was bad, and calld thee a
lad,
And a baffled man by thou I be.
- 12 'He said thou was bad, and calld thee
lad,
And bully to his son cannot be;
For his son Bewick can both write and
read,
And sure I am that cannot thee.
- 13 'I put thee to school, but thou would
not learn,
I bought thee books, but thou would
not read;
But my blessing thou's never have
Till I see with Bewick thou can save
thy head.'
- 14 'Oh, pray forbear, my father dear;
That ever such a thing should be!
Shall I venture my body in field to fight
With a man that's faith and troth to
me?'
- 15 'What's that thou sayst, thou limmer³
loon?
Or how dare thou stand to speak to
me?
If thou do not end this quarrel soon,
Here is my glove thou shalt fight me.'
- 16 Christy stoopd low unto the ground,
Unto the ground, as you'll under-
stand:
'O father, put on your glove again,
The wind hath blown it from your
hand.'

¹ In spite of incongruous touches in the spirit of the
eighteenth century — the date of the oldest copy —
this is a proper ballad.

² brother-in-arms.

³ rascally.

- 17 'What's that thou sayst, thou limmer loon?
Or how dare thou stand to speak to me?
If thou do not end this quarrel soon,
Here is my hand thou shalt fight me.'
- 18 Christy Grahame is to his chamber gone,
And for to study, as well might be, ⁷⁰
Whether to fight with his father dear,
Or with his bully Bewick he.
- 19 'If it be [my] fortune my bully to kill,
As you shall boldly understand,
In every town that I ride through,
They'll say, There rides a brother-
less man!
- 20 'Nay, for to kill my bully dear,
I think it will be a deadly sin;
And for to kill my father dear,
The blessing of heaven I neer shall
win. ⁸⁰
- 21 'O give me your blessing, father,' he said,
'And pray well for me for to thrive;
If it be my fortune my bully to kill,
I swear I'll neer come home alive.'
- 22 He put on his back a good plate-jack,
And on his head a cap of steel,
With sword and buckler by his side;
O gin¹ he did not become them well!
- 23 'O fare thee well, my father dear!
And fare thee well, thou Carlisle
town! ⁹⁰
If it be my fortune my bully to kill,
I swear I'll neer eat bread again.'
- 24 Now we'll leave talking of Christy
Grahame,
And talk of him again belive;²
But we will talk of bonny Bewick,
Where he was teaching his scholars
five.
- 25 Now when he had learned them well to
fence,
To handle their swords without any
doubt,
He's taken his own sword under his
arm, ⁹⁹
And walkd his father's close about.
- 26 He lookd between him and the sun,
To see what farleys³ he could see;
There he spy'd a man with armour on,
As he came riding over the lee.
- 27 'I wonder much what man yon be
That so boldly this way does come;
I think it is my highest friend,
I think it is my bully Grahame. ¹⁰⁸
- 28 'O welcome, O welcome, bully Grahame!
O man, thou art my dear, welcome!
O man, thou art my dear, welcome!
For I love thee best in Christendom.'
- 29 'Away, away, O bully Bewick,
And of thy bullyship let me be!
The day is come I never thought on;
Bully, I'm come here to fight with
thee.'
- 30 'O no! not so, O bully Grahame!
That eer such a word should spoken
be!
I was thy master, thou was my scholar:
So well as I have learn'd thee.' ¹²⁰
- 31 'My father he was in Carlisle town,
Where thy father Bewick there met he;
He said I was bad, and he calld me a lad,
And a baffled man by thou I be.'
- 32 'Away, away, O bully Grahame,
And of all that talk, man, let us be!
We'll take three men of either side
To see if we can our fathers agree.'
- 33 'Away, away, O bully Bewick,
And of thy bullyship let me be! ¹³⁰
But if thou be a man, as I trow thou art,
Come overt his ditch and fight with
me.'
- 34 'O no! not so, my bully Grahame!
That eer such a word should spoken be!
Shall I venture my body in field to fight
With a man that's faith and troth to
me?'
- 35 'Away, away, O bully Bewick,
And of all that care, man, let us be!
If thou be a man, as I trow thou art,
Come over this ditch and fight with
me.' ¹⁴⁰

¹ if.² soon.³ strange sights.

- 36 'Now, if it be my fortune thee, Gra-
hame, to kill,
As God's will's, man, it all must be;
But if it be my fortune thee, Grahame,
to kill,
'Tis home again I'll never gae.'
- 37 'Thou art of my mind then, bully Be-
wick,
And sworn-brethren will we be;
If thou be a man, as I trow thou art,
Come over this ditch and fight with
me.'
- 38 He flang his cloak from [off] his shoul-
ders,
His psalm-book out of his hand flang
he, ¹⁵⁰
He clapt his hand upon the hedge,
And oer lap he right wantonly.
- 39 When Grahame did see his bully come,
The salt tear stood long in his eye:
'Now needs must I say that thou art a
man,
That dare venture thy body to fight
with me.
- 40 'Now I have a harness on my back;
I know that thou hath none on thine;
But as little as thou hath on thy back,
Sure as little shall there be on mine.'
- 41 He flang his jack from off his back, ^{x61}
His steel cap from his head flang
he;
He's taken his sword into his hand,
He's tyed his horse unto a tree.
- 42 Now they fell to it with two broa[d
swords],
For two long hours fought Bewick
[and he];
Much sweat was to be seen on them
both,
But never a drop of blood to see.
- 43 Now Grahame gave Bewick an ackward¹
stroke, ^{x69}
An ackward stroke surely struck he;
He struck him now under the left
breast,
Then down to the ground as dead fell
he.
- 44 'Arise, arise, O bully Bewick,
Arise, and speak three words to me!
Whether this be thy deadly wound,
Or God and good surgeons will mend
thee.'
- 45 'O horse, O horse, O bully Grahame,
And pray do get thee far from me!
Thy sword is sharp, it hath wounded
my heart,
And so no further can I gae. ^{x80}
- 46 'O horse, O horse, O bully Grahame,
And get thee far from me with speed!
And get thee out of this country quite!
That none may know who's done the
deed.'
- 47 'O if this be true, my bully dear,
The words that thou dost tell to me,
The vow I made, and the vow I'll
keep;
I swear I'll be the first that die.'
- 48 Then he stuck his sword in a moody-
hill,²
Where he lap thirty good foot and
three; ^{x90}
First he bequeathed his soul to God,
And upon his own sword-point lap he.
- 49 Now Grahame he was the first that died,
And then came Robin Bewick to see;
'Arise, arise, O son!' he said,
'For I see thou's won the victory.
- 50 'Arise, arise, O son!' he said,
'For I see thou's won the victory:'
[Father, co]uld ye not drunk your wine
at home, ^{x99}
[And le]tten me and my brother be?
- 51 'Nay, dig a grave both low and wide,
And in it us two prave bury;
But bury my bully Grahame on the
sunside,
For I'm sure he won the victory.'
- 52 Now we'll leave talking of these two
brethren,
In Carlisle town where they lie slain,
And talk of these two good old men,
Where they were making a pitiful
moan.

¹ awkward, backhand.² mole-hill.

- 53 With that bespoke now Robin Bewick:
 'O man was I not much to blame?
 I have lost one of the liveliest lads ²¹¹
 That ever was bred unto my name.'
- 54 With that bespoke my good lord Gra-
 hame:
 'O man, I have lost the better block;
 I have lost my comfort and my joy,
 I have lost my key, I have lost my
 lock.
- 55 'Had I gone through all Ladderdale,
 And forty horse had set on me,
 Had Christy Grahame been at my back,
 So well as he woud guarded me.' ²²⁰
- 56 I have no more of my song to sing,
 But two or three words to you I'll
 name;
 But 't will be talk'd in Carlisle town
 That these two [old] men were all
 the blame.

THE DOWY HOUMS O YARROW¹

- 1 LATE at een, drinkin the wine,
 Or early in a mornin,
 The set a combat them between,
 To fight it in the dawnin.
- 2 'O stay at hame, my noble lord!
 O stay at hame, my marrow!²
 My cruel brother will you betray,
 On the dowy houms o Yarrow.'
- 3 'O fare ye weel, my lady gaye!
 O fare ye weel, my Sarah!
 For I maun gae, tho I neer return
 Frae the dowy banks o Yarrow.' ¹⁰
- 4 She kissed his cheek, she kaimd his
 hair,
 As she had done before, O;
 She belted on his noble brand,
 An he's awa to Yarrow.
- 5 O he's gane up yon high, high hill —
 I wat he gaed wi sorrow —
 And in a den spied nine armd men,
 I the dowy houms o Yarrow. ²⁰
- 6 'O ir⁴ ye come to drink the wine,
 As ye hae doon before, O?
 Or ir ye com to wield the brand,
 On the bonny banks o Yarrow?'
- 7 'I im no come to drink the wine,
 As I hae don before, O,
 But I im come to wield the brand,
 On the dowy houms o Yarrow.'
- 8 Four he hurt, an five he slew,
 On the dowy houms o Yarrow, ³⁰
 Till that stubborn knight came him be-
 hind,
 An ran his body thorow.
- 9 'Gae hame, gae hame, good-brother
 John,
 An tell your sister Sarah
 To come an lift her noble lord,
 Who's sleepin sound on Yarrow.'
- 10 'Yestreen I dreamd a dolefu dream;
 I kend⁶ there wad be sorrow;
 I dreamd I pu'd the heather green,
 On the dowy banks o Yarrow.' ⁴⁰
- 11 She gaed up yon high, high hill —
 I wat she gaed wi sorrow —
 An in a den spy'd nine dead men,
 On the dowy houms o Yarrow.
- 12 She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his
 hair,
 As oft she did before, O;
 She drank the red blood frae him ran,
 On the dowy houms o Yarrow.
- 13 'O haud your tongue, my douchter
 dear,
 For what needs a' this sorrow? ⁵⁰
 I'll wed you on a better lord
 Than him you lost on Yarrow.'
- 14 'O haud your tongue, my father dear,
 And dinna grieve your Sarah;
 A better lord was never born
 Than him I lost on Yarrow.
- 15 'Tak hame your ousen,⁸ take hame
 your kye,⁷
 For they hae bred our sorrow;
 I wiss⁵ that they had a' gane mad
 When they cam first to Yarrow.' ⁶⁰

¹ The doleful banks of Yarrow. Also called *The Braes of Yarrow*.

² sweetheart.

⁴ are. ⁵ knew. ⁶ oxen. ⁷ kine. ⁸ wish.

THE DÆMON LOVER¹

- 1 'O WHERE have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and mair?'
'O I'm come to seek my former vows
Ye granted me before.'
- 2 'O hold your tongue of your former
vows,
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former
vows,
For I am become a wife.'
- 3 He turned him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his ee: ¹⁰
'I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.'
- 4 'I might hae had a king's daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love o thee.'
- 5 'If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yer sel ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane. ²⁰
- 6 'If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?'
- 7 'I hae seven ships upon the sea —
The eighth brought me to land —
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand.'
- 8 She has taken up her two little babes,
Kissd them baith cheek and chin: ³⁰
'O fair ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I'll never see you again.'
- 9 She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o the taffetie,
And the masts o the beaten gold.
- 10 She had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie ² grew his ee. ⁴⁰
- ¹ Often called *James Harris*. ² gloomy.

- 11 They had not saild a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.
- 12 'O hold your tongue of your weeping,'
says he,
'Of your weeping now let me be;
I will shew you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy.'
- 13 'O what hills are you, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?' ⁵⁰
'O yon are the hills of heaven,' he said,
'Where you will never win.'⁸
- 14 'O whaten a mountain is yon,' she said,
'All so dreary wi frost and snow?'
'O yon is the mountain of hell,' he cried,
'Where you and I will go.'
- 15 He strack the tap-mast wi his hand,
The fore-mast wi his knee,
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea. ⁶⁰

OUR GOODMAN

- 1 HAME came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And then he saw a saddle-horse,
Where nae horse should be.
- 2 'What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came this horse here,
Without the leave o me?'

Recitative. 'A horse?' quo she.
'Ay, a horse,' quo he. ¹⁰

- 3 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat⁴ ye see!
'Tis naething, but a broad sow,
My minnie⁵ sent to me.'
- 'A broad sow?' quo he.
'Ay, a sow,' quo shee.

- 4 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But a saddle on a sow's back
I never saw nane.'

³ come. ⁴ mot, i.e., may. ⁵ mother. ²⁰

- 5 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he;
He spy'd a pair of jack-boots,
Where nae boots should be.
- 6 'What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came these boots here,
Without the leave o me?'
'Boots?' quo she.
'Ay, boots,' quo he. 30
- 7 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
And ill mat ye see!
It's but a pair of water-stoups,¹
My minnie sent to me.'
'Water-stoups?' quo he.
'Ay, water-stoups,' quo she.
- 8 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But siller spurs on water-stoups
I saw never nane.' 40
- 9 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And he saw a sword,
Whare a sword should na be.
- 10 'What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came this sword here,
Without the leave o me?'
'A sword?' quo she.
'Ay, a sword,' quo he. 50
- 11 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat ye see!
It's but a porridge-spurtle,²
My minnie sent to me.'
'A spurtle?' quo she.
'Ay, a spurtle,' quo she.
- 12 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But siller-handed spurtles
I saw never nane.' 60
- 13 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he;

¹ water-pitchers.² porridge stirrer.

- There he spy'd a powderd wig,
Where nae wig shoud be.
- 14 'What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came this wig here,
Without the leave o me?'
'A wig?' quo she.
'Ay, a wig,' quo he. 70
- 15 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
And ill mat you see!
'T is naething but a clocken-hen,³
My minnie sent to me.'
'Clocken hen?' quo he.
'Ay, clocken hen,' quo she.
- 16 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But powder on a clocken-hen
I saw never nane.' 80
- 17 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And there he saw a muckle coat,
Where nae coat shoud be.
- 18 'What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came this coat here,
Without the leave o me?'
'A coat?' quo she.
'Ay, a coat,' quo he. 90
- 19 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat ye see!
It's but a pair o blankets,
My minnie sent to me.'
'Blankets?' quo he.
'Ay, blankets,' quo she.
- 20 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But buttons upon blankets
I saw never nane.' 100
- 21 Ben⁴ went our goodman,
And ben went he,
And there he spy'd a sturdy man,
Where nae man shoud be.
³ sitting hen. ⁴ Into the inner room.

22 'What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came this man here,
Without the leave o me?'

'A man?' quo she.
'Ay, a man,' quo he.

110

23 'Poor blind body,
And blinder mat ye be!
It's a new milking-maid,
My mither sent to me.'

'A maid?' quo he.
'Ay, a maid,' quo she.

24 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But lang-bearded maidens
I saw never naue.'

120

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR

1 It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then,
When our good wife got puddings¹ to
make,
And she's boild them in the pan.

2 The wind sae cauld blew south and north,
And blew into the floor;
Quoth our goodman to our goodwife,
'Gae out and bar the door.'

3 'My hand is in my hussyfskap,²
Goodman, as ye may see;
An it shoud nae be barrd this hundred
year,
It's no be barrd for me.'

10

4 They made a paction tween them twa,
They made it firm and sure,
That the first word whaeer shoud speak,
Should rise and bar the door.

5 Then by there came two gentlemen,
At twelve o'clock at night,
And they could neither see house nor
hall,
Nor coal nor candle-light.

20

6 'Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether is it a poor?'

¹ sausages.² housewifery.

But neer a word wad ane o them speak,
For barring of the door.

7 And first they ate the white puddings,
And then they ate the black;
Tho muckle thought the goodwife to
hersel,
Yet neer a word she spake.

8 Then said the one unto the other,
'Here, man, tak ye my knife;
Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard,
And I'll kiss the goodwife.'

30

9 'But there's nae water in the house,
And what shall we do than?'
What ails thee at the pudding-broo,³
That boils into the pan?'

10 O up then started our goodman,
An angry man was he:
'Will ye kiss my wife before my een,
And sead⁴ me wi pudding-bree?'⁴⁰

11 Then up and started our goodwife,
Gied three skips on the floor:
'Goodman, you've spoken the foremost
word,
Get up and bar the door.'

THE WIFE WRAPT IN WETHER'S SKIN

1 SHE wadna bake, she wadna brew,
Hollin,⁵ green hollin,
For spoiling o her comely hue.
Bend your bow, Robin.

2 She wadna wash, she wadna wring,
For spoiling o her gay goud ring.

3 Robin he's gane to the fald
And caught a weather by the spauld.⁶

4 And he has killed his weather black
And laid the skin upon her back

10

5 'I darena pay⁷ you, for your kin,
But I can pay my weather's skin.

6 'I darena pay my lady's back,
But I can pay my weather's skin.'

³ brew, juice.⁶ shoulder.⁴ scald.⁷ beat.⁵ holly.

- 7 'O Robin, Robin, lat me be,
And I'll a good wife be to thee.
- 8 'It's I will wash, and I will wring,
And never mind my gay goud ring.
- 9 'It's I will bake, and I will brew,
And never mind my comely hue. 20
- 10 'And ginye thinkna that enuegh,
I'se tak the goad and I'se ca¹ the
pleugh.
- 11 'Gin ye ca for mair whan that is doon,
I'll sit i the neuk² and I'll dight³ your
shoon.'

THE BITTER WITHY⁴

- 1 As it fell out on a Holy day,
The drops of rain did fall, did fall,
Our Saviour asked leave of His mother
Mary
If He might go play at ball.
- 2 'To play at ball, my own dear Son,
It's time you was going or gone,
But be sure let me hear no complaint of
You
At night when You do come home.'
- 3 It was upling scorn and downling scorn,
Oh, there He met three jolly jerdins:⁵
Oh, there He asked the three jolly jerdins
II
If they would go play at ball.
- 4 'Oh, we are lords' and ladies' sons,
Born in bower or in hall,
And You are but some poor maid's
child
Born'd in an ox's stall.'
- 5 'If you are lords' and ladies' sons,
Born'd in bower or in hall,
Then at the very last I'll make it ap-
pear
That I am above you all.' 20
- 6 Our Saviour built a bridge with the
beams of the sun,
And over He gone, He gone He,
And after followed the three jolly jerdins,
And drowneded they were all three.
- 7 It was upling scorn and downling
scorn,
The mothers of them did whoop and
call,
Crying out, 'Mary mild, call home your
Child,
For ours are drowneded all.'
- 8 Mary mild, Mary mild, called home her
Child,
And laid our Saviour across her
knee,
30
And with a whole handful of bitter
withy⁶
She gave Him slashes three.
- 9 Then He says to His Mother, 'Oh! the
withy, oh! the withy,
The bitter withy that causes me to
smart, to smart,
Oh! the withy it shall be the very first
tree
That perishes at the heart.'

⁶ willow twig.¹ call, drive. ² nook, corner. ³ clean.⁴ *The Bitter Withy*, probably a genuine popular ballad, was first recorded in 1868, and printed by Mr. Frank Sidgwick in *Notes and Queries*, Series 10, iv, 84 f., July, 1905. See *Pub. Mod. Lang. Ass. Am.*, vol. 23, p. 141, for a discussion of it by G. H. Gerould. It is representative of many mediæval tales of the Saviour's childhood.⁵ An inexplicable word.

JOHN BARBOUR

THE BRUCE

INTRODUCTION

(I, 1-36)

STORYSS to rede ar delitabill,
 Suppos that thai be nocht bot fabill;
 Than suld storyss that suthfast wer,
 And ¹ thai war said on gud maner,
 Hawe doubill plesance in heryng.
 The fyrst plesance is the carping,²
 And the tothir the suthfastnes,
 That schawys the thing rycht as it wes;
 And suth thyngis that ar likand ³
 Tyll ⁴ mannys heryng, ar plesand. 10
 Tharfor I wald fayne set my will,
 Giff my wyt mycht suffice thartill,⁵
 To put in wryt ⁶ a suthfast story,
 That it lest ay furth in memory,
 Swa that na lenth of tyme it let,⁷
 Na ger ⁸ it haly ⁹ be forget.
 For alde storys that men redys,
 Representis to thaim the dedys
 Of stalwart folk that lywynt ar,¹⁰
 Rycht as thai than in presence war. 20
 And, certis, thai suld weill hawe pryss,
 That in thar tyme war wrycht ¹¹ and wyss,
 And led thar lyff in gret trawail,¹²
 And oft in hard stour ¹³ off bataill
 Wan richt gret price off chawalry,
 And war woydyt ¹⁴ off cowardy;
 As wes king Robert off Scotland,
 That hardy wes off hart and hand;
 And gud Schyr James off Douglas,
 That in his tyme sa worthy was,
 That off hys price and hys bounte
 In fer landis renownyt wes he.
 Off thaim I thynk this buk to ma;¹⁵
 Now God gyff grace that I may swa
 Tret it, and bryng it till endyng,
 That I say nocht bot suthfast thing!

HOW SCOTLAND LEARNED TO LOVE LIBERTY

(I, 179-246)

QUHEN ¹⁶ schir Edward, the mychty king,
 Had on this wyss ¹⁷ done his likyng ¹⁸
 Off Ihone the Balleoll, that swa sone
 Was all defawtyt ¹⁹ and undone,
 To Scotland went he than in hy,
 And all the land gan occupy:
 So hale,²⁰ that bath castell and tounne
 War in-till ²¹ his possessiounne,
 Fra Weik anent Orkney
 To Mullyr-snwk in Gallaway: 20
 And stuffyt all with Ingliss men.
 Schyrreffys and bailyheys maid he then;
 And alkyn ²² othir officeris,
 That for to gowern land afferis,²³
 He maid off Inglis nation;
 That worthyt ²⁴ than sa ryth fellone,²⁵
 And sa wykkyt and cowatouss,
 And swa hawtane ²⁶ and dispitouss,
 That Scottis men mycht do na thing
 That evir mycht pleys to thar liking.²⁷ 20
 Thar wyffis wald thai oft forly,²⁸
 And thar dochtrys dispitously;
 And gyff ²⁹ ony thar-at war wrath,
 Thai watyt ³⁰ hym wele with gret scaith,
 For thai suld fynd sone enchesone ³¹
 To put hym to destructione.
 And gyff that ony man thaim by
 Had ony thing that wes worthy,
 As horsse, or hund, or othir thing,
 That plesand war to thar liking, 30
 With rycht or wrang it have wald thai.
 And gyf ony wald thaim withsay,
 Thai suld swa do, that thai suld tyne ³²
 Othir land or lyff, or leyff ³³ in pyne.

¹ If. ² narrative. ³ pleasing. ⁴ To. ⁵ thereto.
⁶ writing. ⁷ hinder, destroy. ⁸ make. ⁹ wholly.
¹⁰ lived before. ¹¹ powerful. ¹² labor. ¹³ shock.
¹⁴ cleared. ¹⁵ make.

¹⁶ In middle Scots *quh*=wh. ¹⁷ wise, fashion.
¹⁸ pleasure. ¹⁹ defaulted. ²⁰ wholly. ²¹ into, in.
²² all kinds of. ²³ belong. ²⁴ became. ²⁵ very
²⁶ cruel. ²⁷ haughty. ²⁸ pleasure. ²⁹ outrage. ³⁰ if,
³¹ lay in wait for. ³² reason. ³³ lose. ³⁴ live.

For thai dempt¹ thaim eftir thar will,
 Takand² na kep³ to rycht na skill.⁴
 A! quhat thai dempt thaim felonly!⁵
 For gud knyechtis that war worthy,
 For litill enchesoune or than nane,
 Thai hangyt be the nekke bane.
 Alas! that folk, that evir wes fre,
 And in fredome wount for to be,
 Throw thar gret myschance and foly,
 War tretyt than sa wykkytly,
 That thar fays⁶ thar iugis was;
 Quhat wrechitnes may man have mar?
 A! fredome is a noble thing!
 Fredome mayss⁷ man to haiff liking;
 Fredome all solace to man giffis:
 He levys at ess that frely levys!
 A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
 Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
 Gyff fredome faillyhe;⁸ for fre liking
 Is yharnt⁹ our¹⁰ all othir thing.
 Na¹¹ he, that ay hass levyt fre,
 May nocht know weil the propyrte,
 The angry, na the wrechyt dome,
 That is cowplyt to foule thyrdome.
 Bot gyff he had assayit it,
 Than all perquer¹² he suld it wyt;¹³
 And suld think fredome mar to pryss
 Than all the gold in warld that is.
 Thus contrar thingis evir-mar
 Discoweryngis off the tothir ar.
 And he that thryll¹⁴ is has nocht his,
 All that he hass enbandownyt¹⁵ is
 Till hys lord, quhat euir he be.

HOW THE KING READ *FERUMBRAS*

(III, 405-67)

THE king, eftir that he was gane,
 To Lowchlomond the way has tane,¹⁶
 And come thar on the thrid day.
 Bot thar-about na bait¹⁷ fand thai,
 That mycht thaim our the watir ber:
 Than war thai wa¹⁸ on gret maner:
 For it wes fer about to ga;
 And thai war in-to dout alsua,
 To meyt thar fayis¹⁹ that spred war wyd.
 Tharfor, endlang the louchhis²⁰ syd,
 Sa besyly thai socht, and fast,
 Tyll Iamys of Dowglas, at the last,

Fand a litill sonkyn bate,²¹
 And to the land it drew, fut-hate.²²
 Bot it sa litill wes, that it
 Mycht our the wattir bot thresum²³ flyt.²⁴
 Thai send thar-off word to the king,
 That wes ioyfull off that fynding;
 And fyrst in-to the bate is gane,
 With him Dowglas; the thrid wes ane²⁵
 That rowyt thaim our deliverly,²⁶
 And set thaim on the land all dry:
 And rowyt sa of-syss²⁷ to and fra,
 Fechand²⁸ ay our²⁹ twa and twa,
 That, in a nycht and in a day,
 Cummyu owt-our³⁰ the louch ar thai.
 For sum off thaim couth swome³¹ full weil,
 And on his bak ber a fardele.³²
 Swa with swymmyng, and with rowyng,
 Thai broecht thaim our, and all thar thing.
 The king, the quhilis,³³ meryly³⁴
 Red to thaim, that war him by,
 Romanys off worthi Ferambrace,
 That worthily our-cummyu³⁵ was
 Throw the rycht douchty Olywer;
 And how the duk-peris³⁶ wer
 Assegyt³⁷ in-till Egrymor,
 Quhar king Lawyne lay thaim befor,
 With may³⁸ thowsandis then I can say.
 And bot eleven within war thai,
 And a woman: and war sa stad,
 That thai na mete thar-within had,
 Bot as thai fra thar fayis³⁹ wan.
 Yheyte⁴⁰ sua contenyt thai thaim than,
 That thai the tour held manlily,
 Till that Rychard off Normandy,
 Magre⁴¹ his fayis, warnyt the king,
 That wes ioyfull off this titling;⁴²
 For he wend⁴³ thai had all bene slayne.
 Tharfor he turnyt in hy⁴⁴ agayne,
 And wan Mantrybill and passit Flagot;
 And syne Lawyne and all his flot⁴⁵
 Disputisly discumfyt he:
 And deliveryt his men all fre,
 And wan the naylis, and the sper,
 And the croune, that Iesu couth⁴⁶ ber;
 And off the croice a gret party⁴⁷
 He wan throw his chewalry.
 The gud king, apoun this maner,
 Comfortyt thaim that war him ner;
 And maid thaim gamyn⁴⁸ and solace,
 Till that his folk all passyt was.

¹ judged. ² taking. ³ heed. ⁴ nor reason. ⁵ How wickedly they condemned them! ⁶ foes. ⁷ makes. ⁸ fail. ⁹ yearned for. ¹⁰ over. ¹¹ nor. ¹² by heart. ¹³ know. ¹⁴ thrall. ¹⁵ subjected. ¹⁶ taken. ¹⁷ boat. ¹⁸ woeful. ¹⁹ foes. ²⁰ lake's.

²¹ boat. ²² hot-foot, hastily. ²³ three at a time. ²⁴ transport. ²⁵ quickly. ²⁶ oft-times. ²⁷ Fetching. ²⁸ over. ²⁹ across. ³⁰ swim. ³¹ burden. ³² meanwhile. ³³ overcome. ³⁴ douze pairs, the Twelve Peers of France. ³⁵ Besieged. ³⁶ more. ³⁷ foes. ³⁸ yet. ³⁹ In spite of. ⁴⁰ tidings. ⁴¹ weened. ⁴² haste. ⁴³ fleet. ⁴⁴ did. ⁴⁵ piece. ⁴⁶ mirth.

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCK- BURN

(xii, 407-588)

THE Scottis men, quhen it wes day,
 Their mess devoutly herd thai say,
 Syne tuk a sop, and maid thame yar.¹
 And quhen, thai all assemblit war,
 And in thair battalis ² all purvait,
 With thair braid baneris all displayit,
 Thai maid knychtis, as it efferis ³
 To men that oysis ⁴ thai mysteris.
 The kyng maid Walter Stewart knycht,
 And Iames of Douglass, that wes wicht,⁵ 10
 And othir als of gret bounte
 He maid, ilkane ⁶ in thair degre.
 Quhen this wes done, that I you say,
 Thai went all furth in gud aray,
 And tuk the playne full apertly,⁷
 Mony wicht man, gud and hardy,
 That wer fulfillit of gret bounte.
 In-till ⁸ thair rowtis ⁹ men mycht se
 The Ynglis men, in othir party,
 That richt as angelis schane brichtly, 20
 War nocht arayit on sic maner;
 For all thair battalis sammyn ¹⁰ wer
 In a schiltrum; ¹¹ bot quethir it wes
 Throu the gret strates ¹² of the plass,
 That thai war rad ¹³ till byd ¹⁴ fichting,
 Or that it wes for abaysing,¹⁵
 I wat ¹⁶ nocht; bot in a schiltrum
 It semyt thai war, all and some,
 Outane ¹⁷ the vaward anerly,
 That with ane richt gret cumpany 30
 Be thame-selvin arayit war,
 And till the battale maid thame yar.
 That folk our-tuk ¹⁸ ane mekill ¹⁹ feld
 On breid, quhar mony a schynand scheld,
 And mony a burnyst bricht armour,
 And mony man of gret valour,
 And mony a baner, bricht and scheyne,
 Micht in that gret schiltrum be seyne.
 And quhen the kyng of Yngland
 Saw Scottis men sa tak on hand 40
 To tak the hard feild so planly,
 And apon fut, he had ferly,²⁰
 And said, 'Quhat? will yon Scottis ficht?'
 'Yaa, sekirly, schir,' than said a knycht,
 Schir Ingerame Vmphrevell hat ²¹ he,
 And said, 'Forsuth, schir, now I se

¹ ready. ² battalions. ³ belongs. ⁴ use.
⁵ stout. ⁶ each one. ⁷ openly. ⁸ In. ⁹ bands.
¹⁰ together. ¹¹ squadron. ¹² narrowness. ¹³ afraid.
¹⁴ bide. ¹⁵ dismay. ¹⁶ know. ¹⁷ Except. ¹⁸ covered.
¹⁹ large. ²⁰ wonder. ²¹ was called.

All the mast ferlifull ²² syecht
 That evir I saw, quhen for to ficht
 The Scottis men has tane on hand
 Agane ²³ the gret mycht of Yngland, 50
 In plane hard feild to gif battale.
 Bot and yhe ²⁴ will trow my consale,
 Yhe sall discomfit thame lightly.
 Yhe sall vitdraw hyne ²⁵ suddanly,
 With battalis, baneris, and pennownys,
 Quhill that we pass our palyeowyns;²⁶
 And ye sall se als soyne at ²⁷ thai,
 Magre thair lordis, sall brek aray,
 And scale ²⁸ thame, our harness to ta.²⁹
 And quhen we se thame scalit swa, 60
 Prik we than on thame hardely,
 And we sall haf thame weill lichtly.
 For than sall nane be knyt ³⁰ to ficht,
 That may withstand our mekill mycht.'
 'I will nocht,' said the king, 'perfay,³¹
 Do sa; for ther sall no man say
 That I suld eschewe the battale,
 Na withdraw me for sic rangale.'³²
 Quhen this wes said that er ³³ said I,
 The Scottis men full devoutly 70
 Knelyt all doune, till God to pray,
 And a schort prayer thair maid thai
 Till God, till help thame in that ficht.
 And quhen the Yngliss king has sicht
 Of thame kneland, he said in hy — ³⁴
 'Yon folk knelis till ask mercy.'
 Schir Ynggerame said, 'Ye say suth now;
 Thai ask mercy, bot nocht at yow.
 For thair trespass to God thai cry.
 I tell yow a thing sekirly, 80
 That yon men will wyn all or de,
 For doubt of ded ³⁵ thar sall nane fle.'
 'Now be it swa,' than said the kyng,
 'We sall it se but ³⁶ delaying.'
 He gert ³⁷ trump up to the assemble;
 On athir ³⁸ syd than men mycht se
 Full mony wicht men and worthy,
 All ready till do chevelry.

Thus war thai boune ³⁹ on athir syde;
 And Yngliss men, with mekill prid, 90
 That war in-till thar awaward,⁴⁰
 Till the battall that schir Eduard
 Gouernyt and led, held straucht thair way.
 The horss with spuris hardnyt ⁴¹ thai,
 And prikit apon thame sturdely;
 And thai met thame richt hardely,

²² wonderful. ²³ Against. ²⁴ if you. ²⁵ hence.
²⁶ pavilions. ²⁷ as soon that. ²⁸ scatter. ²⁹ take.
³⁰ joined together. ³¹ in faith. ³² rabble. ³³ before.
³⁴ haste. ³⁵ fear of death. ³⁶ without. ³⁷ caused.
³⁸ either. ³⁹ ready. ⁴⁰ vanguard. ⁴¹ emboldened.

Swa that, at the assemble thair,
 Sic a frusching¹ of speris wair
 That fer away men mycht it her.
 At thar metyng, for-outen wer,²
 Wer stedis stekit³ mony ane, 100
 Mony gud man borne doune and slane,
 And mony ane hardyment douchtely
 Wes thair eschewit⁴ full hardely.
 Thai dang on othir with wapnys ser;⁵
 Sum of the horss, that stekit wer,
 Ruschit and relit richt royldy.⁶
 Bot the remanant, nocht-for-thi,⁷
 That mycht cum to the assembling,⁸
 For that lat⁹ maid rycht no stynting,¹⁰ 110
 But assemblit full hardely.
 And thai met thame full sturdely
 With speris that war scharp to scher,
 And axis that weill grundyn wer,
 Quhar-with wes roucht full mony rout.¹¹
 The ficht wes thair so fell and stout,
 That mony worthy men and wicht,
 Throu forss, wes fellit in that ficht,
 That had no mycht to ryss agane.
 The Scottis men fast can thame payne¹² 120
 Thair fais mekill mycht to russ.¹³
 I trow thai sall no payne refuss,
 Na perell, quhill thar fais be
 Set in-till herd proplexite.

And quhen the erll of Murref sa¹⁴
 Thair awaward saw stoutly ta¹⁵
 The way to schir Eduard all straucht,
 That met thame with full mekill maucht,
 He held his way with his baner
 Till the gret rout,¹⁶ quhar sammyn¹⁷ wer 130
 The nyne battales that wes so braid,
 That so feill baneris with thame had,
 And of men sa gret quantite,
 That it war wonder for to se.
 The gud erll thiddir tuk the way
 With his battale in gud aray,
 And assemblit so hardely,
 Quhill men mycht her, that had beyn by,
 A gret frusche of the speres that brast.
 For thair fais assalyeit¹⁸ fast, 140
 That on stedis, with mekill prid,
 Com prikand as thai wald our-ryd¹⁹
 The erll and all his company.
 Bot thai met thame so sturdely,
 That mony of thame till erd thai bar.
 And mony a steid wes stekit thar,

And mony gud man fellit undir feit,
 That had no power to riss yeit.
 Ther men mycht se ane hard battale,
 And sum defend and sum assale, 150
 And mony a riall rymmyll²⁰ ryde²¹
 Be roucht²² thair apon aithir syde,
 Quhill throu the byrneiss²³ brist²⁴ the
 blud,
 That till the erd doune stremand yud.²⁵
 The erll of Murreff and his men
 So stoutly thame contenit²⁶ then,
 That thai wan plass²⁷ ay mair and mair
 On thair fais, the quethir²⁸ thai war
 Ay ten for ane, or ma,²⁹ per fay;
 Swa that it semyt weill that thai 160
 War tynt³⁰ emang so gret menghe,³¹
 As thai war plungit in the se.
 And quhen the Yngliss men has seyne
 The erll and all his men be-deyne³²
 Fecht sa stoutly, but effraying,³³
 Richt as thai had nane abaying,³⁴
 Thai pressit thame with all thar mycht.
 And thai, with speris and suerdis³⁵ brycht,
 And axis that rycht scharly schar,³⁶
 In-mydd the visage³⁷ met thame thar 170
 Thar men mycht se ane stalwart stour,³⁸
 And mony men of gret valour
 With speris, macyss,³⁹ and with knyvis,
 And othir wapnys vissill⁴⁰ thair lyvis,
 Swa that mony fell doune all ded;
 The gyrss vox⁴¹ with the blude all red.
 The erll, that wicht wes and worthy,
 And his men faucht so manfully,
 That, quha sa⁴² had seyne thaim that day,
 I trow, forsuth, that thai suld say, 180
 That thai suld do thair devour⁴³ wele,
 Swa that thair fayis suld it feill.

(XIII, 1-408)

Qwhen that thir two first batellis wer
 Assemblit, as I said yow er,
 The Steward, Walter that than wes,
 And the gud lord als of Dougless,
 In a battale quhen that thai saw
 The erll, forouten⁴⁴ dreid or aw,
 Assemmyll⁴⁵ with his company
 On all the folk so sturdely, 190
 For till help him thai held thar way
 With thar battale in gud aray,

²⁰ royal blow. ³¹ severe. ²² reached, struck.
²³ breast-plate. ²⁴ burst. ²⁵ went. ²⁶ conducted.
²⁷ gained ground. ²⁸ although. ²⁹ more. ³⁰ lost.
³¹ numbers. ³² forthwith. ³³ without being afraid.
³⁴ dismay. ³⁵ swords. ³⁶ cut. ³⁷ Face to face.
³⁸ severe shock. ³⁹ maces. ⁴⁰ exchange. ⁴¹ grass
grew. ⁴² whosoever. ⁴³ duty. ⁴⁴ without. ⁴⁵ attack.

¹ breaking. ² without doubt. ³ stabbed.
⁴ achieved. ⁵ various weapons. ⁶ reeled right
⁷ nevertheless. ⁸ encounter. ⁹ hindrance.
¹⁰ stopping. ¹¹ dealt full many a blow. ¹² exert.
¹³ overthrow. ¹⁴ saw. ¹⁵ take. ¹⁶ band, crowd.
¹⁷ together. ¹⁸ assailed. ¹⁹ over-ride.

And assemmyllit so hardely
 Besyd the erl a litill by,
 Thair fais feld¹ thair cummyng weill;
 For with wapnys stalwart of steill
 Thai dang² on thame with all thar mycht.
 Thair fais resavit thame weill, I hycht,³
 With swerdis, speris, and with macyss.
 The battale thair so felloun⁴ was, 200
 And sua richt gret spilling of blud,
 That on the erd the fluss⁵ it stud.
 The Scottis men so weill thame bar,
 And sua gret slauchtir maid thair thar,
 And fra so feill⁶ the livis revit,⁷
 That all the feild was bludy levit.⁸
 That tym thir⁹ thre battalis wer
 All syde be syde fechtand weill neir.
 That mycht man her richt mony dynt
 And wapnys apon armour stynt,¹⁰ 210
 And se tummyll¹¹ knychtis and stedis,
 With mony rich and ryoll wedis
 Defoult roydly under feit.
 Sum held on loft, sum tynt the suet.¹²
 A long quhill thus fechtand¹³ thai wer,
 That men no noyis na cry mycht her;
 Men herd nocht ellis bot granyis¹⁴ and dyntis
 That slew¹⁵ fire, as men dois on flyntis;
 Sa faucht thai ilkane¹⁶ egirly
 That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry, 220
 Bot dang on othir at that mycht,
 With wapnys that war burnyst brycht.
 The arrowis als so thik thair flaw,¹⁷
 That thai mycht say weill, at¹⁸ thaim saw,
 That thai ane hydwiss¹⁹ schour can ma;
 For quhar thai fell, I undirta,
 Thai left eftir thame taknyng²⁰
 That sall neid, as I trow, lechyng.²¹
 The Yngliss archeris schot so fast,
 That, mycht thair schot haf had last,²² 230
 It had beyne hard to Scottis men.
 Bot king Robert, that weill can ken
 That the archeris war perelouss,
 And thar schot hard and richt grevouss,
 Ordanit forrouth²³ the assemble
 His marschall with a gret menghe,²⁴
 Fiff hundreth armyt weill in steill,
 That on licht hors war horsyt weill,
 For to prik emang the archeris,
 And sua assailye thame with speris 240
 That thai no laser haf to schute.
 This marschall that I of mut,²⁵

¹ felt. ² hammered. ³ promise. ⁴ wicked, bitter. ⁵ marsh. ⁶ many. ⁷ bereft. ⁸ left. ⁹ these. ¹⁰ struck. ¹¹ tumble. ¹² lost their life-blood (lit., sweat). ¹³ fighting. ¹⁴ groans. ¹⁵ struck. ¹⁶ each one. ¹⁷ flew. ¹⁸ that. ¹⁹ hideous. ²⁰ token. ²¹ doctoring. ²² continuance. ²³ commanded out from. ²⁴ number. ²⁵ tell.

That schir Robert of Keth was cald,
 As I befor hass to yow tald,
 Quhen that he saw the battalis swa
 Assemmyll and to-giddir ga,
 And saw the archeris schut stoutly,
 With all thame of his company
 In hy apon thame can²⁶ he ryde,
 And our-tik thame at a syde, 250
 And ruschit emang thaim so roydly,
 Strikand thame sua dispitfully,
 And in sic fusioune²⁷ berand doune
 And slayand thame without ransoun,²⁸
 That thai thame scalit euirilkane;²⁹
 And fra that tyme furth ther wes nane
 That assemlyt sic schot till ma.³⁰
 Quhen Scottis archeris saw at swa
 Thai war rebutit,³¹ thai wox hardy,
 With all thar mycht schot egirly 260
 Emang the hors-men that thar raid,
 And woundis wyde to thame thair maid,
 And slew of thame a wele gret dele;
 Thai bar hame hardely and weill.
 For fra³² thair fais archeris were
 Scalit, as I have said yow ere,
 That ma than thai war be gret thing,³³
 Swa that thai dred nocht thar schuting,
 Thai wox so hardy that thame thoucht
 Thai suld set all thair fais at noucht. 270
 The marschall and his company
 Wes yett,³⁴ as to yow ere said I,
 Amang the archeris, quhar thair maid
 With speris rowme quhar at³⁵ thai raid,
 And slew all that thai mycht ourta.³⁶
 And thai weill lichtly mycht do swa,
 For thai had nocht a strak to stynt,
 Na for to hald agane a dynt;
 And agane armyt men to ficht
 May nakit³⁷ men haff litill mycht. 280
 Thai scalit thame on sic maner,
 That sum to thar gret battelis wer
 Withdrawin thaim in full gret hy,
 And sum war fled all utrelly.³⁸
 Bot the folk that behynd thame was,
 That for thair awne folk had no space
 Yett than to cum to the assemblng,
 In agane smertly can thair dyng.³⁹
 The archeris that thair met fleand,⁴⁰
 That than war maid so reeryand,⁴¹ 290
 That thair hertis war tynt⁴² cleirly,
 I trow thair sall nocht seath⁴³ gretly

²⁶ did. ²⁷ confusion. ²⁸ ransom, quarter. ²⁹ scattered everyone. ³⁰ make. ³¹ repulsed. ³² after. ³³ Who were many more than they. ³⁴ gone. ³⁵ room wherever. ³⁶ overtake. ³⁷ unarmed. ³⁸ utterly. ³⁹ did thrust. ⁴⁰ fleeing. ⁴¹ recresant. ⁴² lost. ⁴³ injury.

The Scottis men with schot that day.
 And the gud king Robert, that ay
 Was fillit of full gret bounte,
 Saw how that his battelis thre
 So hardely assemblit thar,
 That so weill in the ficht thame bar,
 And sa fast on thair fais can dyng
 That him thought nane had abaying, 300
 And how the archeris war scalit then;
 He was all blith, and till his men
 He said, "Lordingis, now luk that yhe
 Worthy and of gud covyne¹ be
 At this assemble, and hardy;
 And assemmyll so sturdely
 That no thing may befor yow stand.
 Our men so freschly ar fechtand,
 That thai thair fais has cumrait² swa
 That, be thai presit, I undirta,³ 310
 A litill fastar, yhe sall se
 That thai discumfit soyn⁴ sall be.
 Now ga we on them so hardely,
 And ding on them sa doughtely,
 That they may feele, at our comming,
 That we them hate in meekle thing:
 For great cause they have us made,
 That occupied our landis brade,
 And put all to subiection:
 Your goodis made all thair commoun: 320
 Our kyn and friendis, for their awne,
 Despiteously banded and drawne:
 And wald destroy us gif⁵ his might.
 Bot, I trow, God, through his foresight,
 This day hes grented us his grace
 To wrek⁶ us on them in this place."
 Quhen this was said, thai held thar way,
 And on a syde assemblit thai
 So stoutly, that at thar cummyng
 Thair fais wer ruschit⁷ a gret thing. 330
 Ther men mycht se men freschly ficht,
 And men that worthy war and wycht
 Do mony worthy vassalage;⁸
 Thai faucht as thai war in a rage.
 For quhen the Scottis ynkirly⁹
 Saw thair fais sa sturdely
 Stand in-to battale thame agane,¹⁰
 With all thar mycht and all thar mayne
 Thai layd on, as men out of wit;
 For quhar thai with full strak mycht hit, 340
 Thair mycht no armyng stynt thar strak;¹¹
 Thai to-fruschit¹² thame thai mycht our-tak,
 And with axis sic duschis gaff¹³
 That thai helmis and hedis claff¹⁴

¹ counsel. ² harassed. ³ undertake. ⁴ soon.
⁵ if. ⁶ avenge. ⁷ driven far back. ⁸ prowess.
⁹ specially. ¹⁰ against. ¹¹ check their stroke.
¹² smashed to pieces. ¹³ blows gave. ¹⁴ cleft.

And thair fais richt hardely
 Met thame, and dang on douchtely
 With wapuns that war stith¹⁵ of steill.
 Thar wes the battell strikyn weill;
 So gret dynnyng ther wes of dyntis
 As wapuns apon armor styntis, 350
 And of speris so gret bristing,¹⁶
 With sic thrawing¹⁷ and sic thristing,¹⁸
 Sic gyrnyng, granyng,¹⁹ and so gret
 A noyis, as thai can othir bet,²⁰
 And cryit ensengheis²¹ on everilk²² syd,
 Gifand and takand woundis wyd,
 That it wes hydwiss for till her
 All four the battelis, wicht²³ that wer,
 Fechtand in-till a²⁴ front haly.
 Almychty God! full douchtely 360
 Schir Edward the Bryss and his men
 Amang thair fais contenyt thame then,
 Fechtand in-to sa gud covyne²⁵
 So hardy, worthy, and so fyne,
 That thar awaward²⁶ ruschit was,
 And, magre thairis,²⁷ left the plais,
 And to thar gret rowt to warrand²⁸
 Thai went, that than had apon hand,
 So gret not,²⁹ that thai war effrait,
 For Scottis men thame hard assait,³⁰ 370
 That than war in ane schiltrum³¹ all.
 Quha hapnit in that ficht to fall,
 I trow agane he suld nocht riss.
 Ther men mycht se on mony wiss
 Hardyment eschewit³² douchtely,
 And mony that wicht war and hardy
 Doune under feit lyand all dede,
 Quhar all the feild of blud wes red.
 Armoris and quyntis³³ that thai bare
 With blud wes swa defowlit thar, 380
 That thai mycht nocht discrivit³⁴ be.
 A! mychty God! quha than mycht se
 The Steward Walter and his rowt
 And the gud Dowglas that wes stout
 Fechtand in-to the stalward stour,³⁵
 He suld say that till all honour
 Thai war worthy, that in that ficht
 Sa fast presit thair fais mycht,
 That thai thame ruschit³⁶ quhar thai
 yeid.³⁷
 Thair mycht men se mony a steid 390
 Fleand on stray, that lord had nane.
 A! lord! quha than gud tent³⁸ had tane

¹⁵ strong. ¹⁶ breaking. ¹⁷ twisting. ¹⁸ thrusting.
¹⁹ grinning, groaning. ²⁰ did beat others. ²¹ battle-
 cries. ²² every. ²³ stout. ²⁴ one. ²⁵ with so
 good a plan. ²⁶ vanguard. ²⁷ in spite of themselves.
²⁸ shelter. ²⁹ business. ³⁰ assailed. ³¹ squadron.
³² achieved. ³³ Coats of armor and badges. ³⁴ dis-
 cerned, made out. ³⁵ shock of battle. ³⁶ bore back.
³⁷ went. ³⁸ notice.

To the gud erll off Murreff,
 And his, that swa gret rowtis ¹ gaf,
 And faucht so fast in that battale,
 Tholand ² sic payne and sic travale,
 That thai and thairis maid sic debat,
 That quhar thai com, thai maid thaim gat! ³
 Than mycht men heir ensengheis cry,
 And Scottis men cry hardely, ⁴⁰⁰
 'On thame! On thame! On thame! thai
 fail!' ⁴⁰⁰

With that so hard thai can assail,
 And slew all that thai mycht our-ta, ⁴
 And the Scottis archeris alsua
 Schot emang thame so sturdely,
 Ingrevand ⁵ thame so gretumly, ⁶
 That quhat for ⁷ thame that with thame
 faucht,

And swa gret rowtis to thame raucht, ⁸
 And presit thame full egirly,
 And quhat for arrowes that felly ⁴¹⁰
 Mony gret woundis can thame ma, ⁹
 And slew fast of thair horss alsua,
 That thai vayndist a litell we ¹⁰;
 Thai dred so gretly thame till de ¹¹
 That thair covyne was war than eir. ¹²
 For thai that with thame fechtand weir
 Set hardyment, and slynth, and will,
 With hart and corage als thar-till, ¹³
 And all thair mayne and all thar mycht,
 To put thame foully to the flycht. ⁴²⁰

In this tyme that I tell of her,
 That the battall on this maner
 Wes strikin, ¹⁴ quhar on athir party
 Thai war fechtand richt manfully,
 Yhemen, swanys, and poveraill, ¹⁵
 That in the pare to yheyme ¹⁶ vittale
 War left; quhen thai wist, but lesing, ¹⁷
 That thair lordis with fell fichtyng
 On thair fais assemblit war,
 Ane of them-selwyne that wes thar ⁴³⁰
 Capitane of thame all thai maid;
 And schetis that war sum-deill braid
 Thai festnyt in steid of baneris
 Apon lang treis and on speris,
 And said that thai wald se the ficht,
 And help thar lordis at thar mycht.
 Quhen her-till all assentit war,
 And in a rowt assemblit ar,
 Fiften thousand thai war and ma.
 And than in gret hy thai can ga ¹⁸ ⁴⁴⁰

With thair baneris all in a rout,
 As thai had men beyn stith ¹⁹ and stout.
 Thai com with all that assemble
 Richt quhill ²⁰ thai mycht the battale se.
 Than all at anys ²¹ thai gaf ane cry —
 'Apon thame! on thame hardely!'
 And thar-with-all cumand ²² ar thai.
 Bot thai war yeit weil fer away,
 And Yngliss men, that ruschit war
 Throu forss of ficht, as I said air, ²³ ⁴⁵⁰
 Quhen thai saw cum with sic a cry
 Toward thame sic ane cumpny,
 That thai thocht weil als mony war
 As at ²⁴ war fechtand with thame thar,
 And thai befor had thame noch seyne,
 Than, wit yhe weil, withouten weyne, ²⁵
 Thai war abasit so gretumly, ²⁶
 That the best and the mast hardy
 That wes in-till the oost ²⁷ that day
 Wald, with thar mensk, ²⁸ have beyn away.
 The king Robert be thair relyng ²⁹ ⁴⁶⁰
 Saw thai war neir discomfyting.
 And his ensenghe can hely ³⁰ cry.
 Than with thame of his cumpny
 His fais presit so fast, that thai
 War than in-till sa gret effray, ³¹
 That thai left place ay mar and mar.
 For all the Scottis men that war thar,
 Quhen thai saw thame eschew ³² the ficht,
 Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht,
 That thai scalit in tropellis ser, ³³ ⁴⁷⁰
 And till discumfitor war ner;
 And sum of thame fled all planly.
 Bot thai that wicht war and hardy,
 That schame letit till ta ³⁴ the ficht,
 At gret myschef mantemyt ³⁵ the ficht,
 And stithly in the stour can stand.
 And quhen the king of Ingland
 Saw his men fle in syndry place,
 And saw his fais rout, ³⁶ that was ⁴⁸⁰
 Worthyn so wicht ³⁷ and so hardy,
 That all his folk war haley ³⁸
 Swa stonayit, ³⁹ that thai had no mycht
 To stynt thair fais in the ficht,
 He was abasit so gretumly,
 That he and all his cumpny,
 Fif hundreth armyt weil at rycht,
 In-till a frusche ⁴⁰ all tuk the flycht,
 And till the castell held ther way.
 And yeit, as I herd sum men say, ⁴⁹⁰

¹⁹ able. ²⁰ till. ²¹ once. ²² coming. ²³ before.
²⁴ that. ²⁵ doubt. ²⁶ so greatly dismayed. ²⁷ host.
²⁸ honor. ²⁹ reeling, wavering. ³⁰ loudly. ³¹ in
 such a fright. ³² avoid. ³³ scattered in several small
 bands. ³⁴ hindered from taking. ³⁵ maintained.
³⁶ host. ³⁷ Become so powerful. ³⁸ completely.
³⁹ dismayed. ⁴⁰ In broken ranks.

¹ blows. ² Enduring. ³ yield ground. ⁴ overtake.
⁵ Injuring. ⁶ severely. ⁷ what with. ⁸ reached
 those so great blows. ⁹ did cause. ¹⁰ gave way a little.
¹¹ to die. ¹² their plight was worse than before. ¹³ also
 thereto. ¹⁴ stricken, fought. ¹⁵ Yeomen, rustics, and
 poor people. ¹⁶ guard. ¹⁷ without mistake. ¹⁸ did go.

That of Vallanch schir Amer
 Quhen he the feld saw vencust ¹ ner,
 By the renye ² led away the king,
 Agane his will, fra the fichting.
 And quhen schir Gelis de Argente
 Saw the king thus and his menghe ³
 Schape thame to fle so spedely,
 He com richt to the kyng in hy,
 And said, 'Schir, sen that is swa,
 That ye thusgat ⁴ your gat will ga, ⁵⁰⁰
 Haffis ⁶ gud day! for agane will I;
 Yheit fled I nevir sekirly,⁷
 And I cheiss heir to byde and de
 Than till lif heir ⁸ and schamfully fle.'⁹
 His brydill than but mair abaid ⁹
 He turnyt, and agane he raid,
 And on schir Eduard the Brysis rout
 That wes so sturd and so stout,
 As dreid of nakyn ¹⁰ thing had he,
 He prikit, cryand 'Argente!'
 And thai with speris swa him met,
 And swa feill ¹¹ speris on hym set,
 That he and horss war chargit swa
 That bath doune to the erd can ga;
 And in that place than slayne wes he.
 Of his ded wes rycht gret pite;
 He wes the thrid best knyght, perfay,
 That men wist lifland in his day;
 He did mony a fair iourne.¹²
 On Sarisenis thre derenyeis ¹³ did he; ⁵²⁰
 And in-till ilk derenye of thai
 He vencust Sarisenis twa;
 His gret worschip tuk thar ending.
 And fra ¹⁴ schir Amer with the king
 Wes fled, wes nane that durst abyde,
 Bot fled, sealit on ilka syde.
 And thair fais thame presit fast,
 Thai war, to say suth, all agast,
 And fled swa richt effrayitly ¹⁵
 That of thame a full gret party ⁵³⁰
 Fled to the wattir of Forth; and thar
 The mast part of them drownit war.
 And Bannockburn, betuix the braiss,¹⁶
 Of horss and men so chargit wass,
 That apoun drownit horss and men
 Men mycht pass dry atour ¹⁷ it then.
 And laddis, swanys, and rangall,¹⁸
 Quhen thai saw vencust the battall,
 Ran emang thame and swa can sla
 Thai folk, that no defens mycht ma, ⁵⁴⁰

That it war pite for to se.
 I herd nevir quhar, in na cuntre,
 Folk at swa gret myschef war stad ¹⁹;
 On a ²⁰ syde thai thair fais had,
 That slew thame doune without mercy,
 And thai had on the tothir party
 Bannockburne, that sa cummyrsum ²¹ was
 Of slyk,²² and depues for till pas,
 That thair mycht nane atour it ryde.
 Thame worthit,²³ magre thairis,²⁴ abyde; ⁵⁵⁰
 Swa that sum slayne, sum drownit war;
 Micht nane eschap that evir com thar.
 The quhethir ²⁵ mony gat away,
 That ellis-whar fled, as I herd say.
 The kyng, with thame he with him had,
 In a rout till the castell raid,
 And wald have beyn tharin, for thai
 Wist noch quhat gat ²⁶ to get away.
 Bot Philip the Mowbray said him till
 'The castell, schir, is at yhour will; ⁵⁶⁰
 Bot, cum yhe in it, yhe sall se
 That yhe sall soyne assegit be.
 And thar sall nane of all Yngland
 To mak yow rescourss ²⁷ tak on hand.
 And but rescours may no castele
 Be baldin lang: yhe wat this wele;
 Tharfor confort yow, and relye ²⁸
 Your men about yow richt straitlye,
 And haldis about the Park the way.
 Knyt yow als sadly ²⁹ as yhe may, ⁵⁷⁰
 For I trow that nane sall haf mycht
 That chassis, with so feill to ficht.'
 And as he consalit, thai have done;
 Beneth the castell went thai soyne,³⁰
 Richt by the Rownde Tabill thair way,
 And syne the Park enveronyt ³¹ thai,
 And toward Lithkew held in hy.
 Bot, I trow, thai sall hastely
 Be convoyit with folk, that thai,
 I trow, mycht suffer weill away! ³² ⁵⁸⁰
 For schir James, lord of Douglass,
 Com till his kyng and askit the chass,
 And he gaf him lef but abaid.³³
 Bot all to few of horss he hade;
 He had noch in his rowt sexty,
 The quhethir he sped him hastely
 The way eftir the kyng to ta.
 Now let him on his wayis ga,
 And eftir this we sall weill tell
 Quhat till hym in his chass byfell. ⁵⁹⁰

¹ vanquished. ² rein. ³ retinue. ⁴ in this fashion. ⁵ will go your way. ⁶ Have. ⁷ certainly. ⁸ to live here. ⁹ without more delay. ¹⁰ no kind of. ¹¹ many. ¹² feat of arms. ¹³ conflicts. ¹⁴ after. ¹⁵ in a panic. ¹⁶ banks. ¹⁷ across. ¹⁸ peasants and rabble.

¹⁹ placed. ²⁰ one. ²¹ difficult to cross. ²² mud. ²³ It behooved them. ²⁴ in spite of themselves. ²⁵ Nevertheless. ²⁶ way. ²⁷ rescue. ²⁸ rally. ²⁹ close your ranks as closely. ³⁰ soon. ³¹ went round. ³² would gladly have absent. ³³ without delay.

'BLIND HARRY'

THE WALLACE

THE FISHING ADVENTURE

(1, 367-433)

So on a tym he desyrit to play.
In Aperill the three and twentieth day,
Till Erevyn wattir fysche to tak he went;
Sic fantasye fell in his entent.¹
To leide² his net, a child furth with him
yeid;³

But he, or nowne,⁴ was in a fellowne⁵ dreid.
His suerd he left, so did he nevir agayne;
It dide him gud, suppos⁶ he sufferyt payne.
Off that labour as than he was nocht sle:⁷
Happy he was, tuk fysche haboundanle.⁸ 10
Or⁸ of the day ten hours our couth pas,⁹
Ridand thar come, ner by quhar Wallace was,
The lorde Persye, was captane than off Ayr;
Fra thine¹⁰ he turnde and couth to Glas-
kow fair.¹¹

Part of the court had Wallace labour seyne,
Till him raid five cled into ganand greyne,¹²
And said sone; 'Scot, Martyns fysche¹³ we
wald have.'

Wallace meklye agayne ansuer him gave;
'It war resone, me think, y he suld haif part:
Waith¹⁴ suld be delt, in all place, with fre
hart.'¹⁵

He bad his child, 'Gyff thaim of our
waithyng,'¹⁴

The Sothroun said; 'As now of thi delyng
We will nocht tak, thow wald giff us our¹⁶
small.'

He lychtyt down, and fra the child tuk all.
Wallas said than; 'Gentill men gif¹⁶ ye be,
Leiff us sum part, we pray for cheryte.
An agyt knycht servis our Lady to day;
Gud frend, leiff part and tak nocht allaway.'
'Thow sall haiff leiff¹⁷ to fysche, and tak
the ma,¹⁸

All this forsuth sall in our flytting¹⁹ ga.

We serff a lord; thir²⁰ fysches all till him
gang.'

Wallace ansuerd, said; 'Thow art in the
wrang.'

'Quham thowis²¹ thow, Scot? in faith thow
servis²² a blaw.'

Till him he ran, and out a suerd can²³ draw.
Willyham was wa²⁴ he bad na wappynis thar,
Bot the poutstaff,²⁵ the quhilk²⁶ in hand he
bar.

Wallas with it fast on the cheik him tuk
Wyth so gud will, quhill²⁷ of his feit he
schuk.

The suerd flaw fra him a fur breid²⁸ on the
land.

Wallas was glaid, and hynt²⁹ it sone in
hand;

And with the swerd awkward³⁰ he him gave
Undyr the hat, his crage³¹ in sondre drave.
Be that the layff³² lychtyt about Wallas;
He had no helpe, only bot Goddis grace.
On athir side full fast on him thai dang;³³
Gret perell was giff thai had lestyt lang.
Apon the hede in gret ire he strak ane;
The scherand³⁴ suerd glaid³⁵ to the colar
bane.

Ane othir on the arme he hitt so hardely,
Quhill hand and suerd bathe on the feld
can ly.

The tothir twa fled to thar hors agayne;
He stekit him was last apon the playne.
Thre slew he thar, twa fled with all thair
mycht

Eftir thar lord; bot he was out off sicht,
Takand the mure,³⁶ or he and thai couth
twyne.³⁷

Till him thai raid onon, or thai wald blyne,³⁸
And cryit; 'Lord, abide; your men ar
martyrit down³⁹

Rycht cruelly, her in this fals regioun.

²⁰ these. ²¹ Sayest 'thou' to. MS. *douris*. ²² de-
serves. ²³ did. ²⁴ woeful. ²⁵ pole (with a net on
the end). ²⁶ which. ²⁷ till. ²⁸ a furrow's length
away. ²⁹ seized. ³⁰ with a backward stroke. ³¹ neck.
³² By that time the rest. ³³ struck. ³⁴ cutting.
³⁵ glided. ³⁶ Crossing the moor. ³⁷ separate.
³⁸ cease. ³⁹ cut down.

¹ Such a fancy he conceived. ² carry. ³ a young
fellow went with him. ⁴ ere noon. ⁵ extreme.
⁶ although. ⁷ skillful. ⁸ Ere. ⁹ did pass by.
¹⁰ thence. ¹¹ did go to Glasgow. ¹² in comely green.
¹³ Unexplained. ¹⁴ Spoil. ¹⁵ too. ¹⁶ if. ¹⁷ have
leave. ¹⁸ more for thyself. ¹⁹ baggage.

Five of our court her at the wattir baid,¹
 Fysche for to bryng, thoct it na profyt
 maid.⁶⁰
 We ar chapyt,² bot in feyld slayne are
 thre.³
 The lord speryt;³ 'How mony mycht thai
 be?'
 'We saw bot ane that has discumfyst us
 all.'
 Than lewch⁴ he lowde, and said; 'Foule mot
 yow fall;⁵
 Sen⁶ ane yow all has putt to confusioun.
 Quha meny⁷ it maist, the devyll of hell
 him droun;
 This day for me, in faith, he beis nocht
 socht.'

WALLACE AND THE ENGLISH QUEEN

(VIII, 1213-1496)

ADAM WALLACE and Boid furth with him
 yeid,⁸

By a revir, throu out a floryst⁹ meid.
 And as thai walk atour¹⁰ the feyldis greyn,
 Out off the south thai saw quhar at¹¹ the
 queyn,

Towart the ost,¹² come ridand sobyrlly;
 And fyfty ladyis was in hyr company,
 Wallyt off¹³ wit, and demyt¹⁴ off renoun;
 Sum wedowis war, and sum off religioun;
 And seven preistis that entrit¹⁵ war in age.
 Wallace to sic did nevyr gret owtrage,¹⁶
 Bot gyff¹⁶ till him thai maid a gret offens.
 Thus prochynt¹⁷ thai on towart thar presens.
 At the palyoun,¹⁸ quhar thai the lyoun saw,
 To ground thai lycht, and syne¹⁹ on kneis
 can faw;²⁰

Prayand for pece thai ery with petous cher.
 Erlil Malcom said; 'Our chyftayn is nocht
 her.'

He bad hyr rys, and said it was nocht rycht,
 A queyn on kneis till ony lawar²¹ wyeht.
 Up by the hand the gud erll has hyr tayn;
 Atour the bent²² to Wallace ar thai gayn.
 Quhen scho him saw, scho wald haiff knelyt
 doune;²¹
 In armys sone he caught this queyn with
 croun,

And kyssyt hyr withoutyn wordis mor;
 Sa dyd he nevyr to na Sotheron befor.
 'Madem,' he said, 'rycht welcun mot ye be;
 How plessis yow our ostyng²³ for to se?'
 'Rycht weyll,' scho said, 'off frendschip
 haiff we neid;

God grant ye wald off our nesis²⁴ to speid.
 Suffyr we mon,²⁵ suppos it lik²⁶ us ill;
 Bot trastis weyll,²⁷ it is contrar our will.'³⁰
 'Ye sall remayn, with this lord I mon gang;
 Fra your presens we sall nocht tary lang.'
 The erll and he on to the palyoun yeid,
 With gud avys to deym mar²⁸ off this deid.
 Till consell son Wallace gart²⁹ call thaim to:
 'Lordys,' he said, 'ye wait³⁰ quhat is ado.
 Off thar cummyng my self has na ples-
 ance;

Herfor mon we wyrk with ordinance.³¹
 Wemen may become tempnyng in to
 wer;³²

Amang fullis³³ that can thaim nocht for-
 ber.⁴⁰

I say nocht this be thir,³⁴ nor yeit the queyn;
 I trow it be bot gud that scho will meyn.
 Bot sampyll³⁵ tak off lang tym passit by;
 At Rownsywaill³⁶ the tresoun was playnly
 Be wemen maid, that Ganyelon with him
 brocht,

And Turke wyn;³⁷ forber thaim couth thai
 nocht.

Langws³⁸ in wer gert thaim desyr thair will,
 Quhilk brocht Charlis to fellow³⁹ loss and ill.
 The flour off France, withoutyn redemp-
 cioun,

Throucht that foull deid, was brocht to con-
 fusioun.⁵⁰

Commaund your men tharfor in privay
 wys,⁴⁰

Apayn⁴¹ off lyff thai wyrk nocht on sic wys,
 Nane spek with thaim, bot wysmen off gret
 wail,⁴²

At⁴³ lordis ar, and sworn to this consaill.'
 Thir chargis thai did als wysly as thai
 mocht;

This ordynance throw all the ost was
 wrocht.

He and the erll bathe to the queyn thai
 went,

Rasavyt hyr fayr, and brocht hyr till a tent;

¹ abode. ² escaped. ³ asked. ⁴ laughed.
⁵ Curse on you. ⁶ Since. ⁷ Who bemoans. ⁸ went.
⁹ blooming. ¹⁰ across. ¹¹ where that. ¹² host.
¹³ Chosen for. ¹⁴ judged. ¹⁵ advanced. ¹⁶ Unless.
¹⁷ approached. ¹⁸ pavilion. ¹⁹ then. ²⁰ did fall.
²¹ lower. ²² plain.

²³ array. ²⁴ Perhaps corruption of needs. ²⁵ must.
²⁶ please. ²⁷ believe well. ²⁸ With good advice to
 judge more. ²⁹ caused. ³⁰ know. ³¹ order.
³² Women may become tempting in war. MS. be con-
 tempnyng. ³³ fools. ³⁴ concerning these. ³⁵ exam-
 ple. ³⁶ Roncesvalles. ³⁷ Turkish wine. ³⁸ tedium (?).
³⁹ deadly. ⁴⁰ privately. ⁴¹ On pain. ⁴² avail,
 weight. ⁴³ That.

To dyner bownyt¹ als gudly as thai can;
And servit was with mony likly² man. 60
Gud purvyance the queyn had with hyr
wrocht;

A say³ scho tuk off all thyng at thai
brocht.

Wallace persavyt, and said; 'We haiff no
dreid:

I can nocht trow ladyis wald do sic deid,
To poyssoun men, for all Ingland to wyn.'

The queyn ansuerd; 'Gyff poyssoun be
tharin,

Off ony thyng quhilk is brocht her with me,
Apon my self fyrst sorow sall ye se.'

Sone eftir meit, a marchell gart all absent,
Bot lordis, and thai at suld to consaill went.

Ladyis apperyt in presens with the queyn.
Wallace askyt, quhat hyr cummyng mycht

meyn. 72

'For pes,' scho said, 'at we haiff to yow
socht;

This byrnan⁴ wer in baill⁵ has mony
brocht.

Ye grant us pees, for him that deit on tre.'
Wallace ansuerd; 'Madeym, that may

nocht be.

Ingland has doyne sa gret harmys till us,
We may nocht pass, and lychtly leiff it

thus.'

'Yeis,' said the queyne, 'for crystyn folk
we ar.

For Goddis saik, sen we desyr no mar, 80
We awcht pess.'⁶ 'Madeym, that I deny.

The perfy caus I sall yow schaw for quy;
Ye seke na pes bot for your awn availl.'

Quhen your fals king had Scotland grippyt
haill,

For nakyn⁸ thing that he befor him fand,
He wald nocht thoill⁹ the rycht blud in our

land;

Bot reft thair rent, syne put thaim self to
dede.¹⁰

Ransoun off gold mycht mak us na remed.
His fell fals wer¹¹ sall on him self be

seyne.'

Than sobyrlly till him ansuerd the queyn; 90
'Off thir wrangis¹² amendis war most fair.'

'Madeym,' he said, 'off him we ask no
mar,

Bot at he wald byd¹³ us in to battaill;

And God be juge, he kennys¹⁴ the mater
haill.'

1 prepared. 2 suitable. 3 taste. 4 burning.
5 harm. 6 ought to have peace by right. 7 advantage.

8 no kind. 9 endure. 10 death. 11 terrible.
unjust war. 12 these wrongs. 13 await. 14 knows.

'Sic mendis,' scho said, 'war nocht rycht
gud, think me:

Pes now war best, and¹⁵ it mycht purchest
be.

Wald ye the grant pes, and truis¹⁶ with us tak,
Throuh all Ingland we suld gar prayeris

mak

For yow, and thaim at in the wer war lost.'
Than Wallace said; 'Quhar sic thing cum-

mys throuh bost,¹⁷ 100

Prayer off fors,¹⁸ quhar so at it be wrocht,
Till us helpis othyr litill or ellis nocht.'

Warly¹⁹ scho said; 'Thus wysmen has us
kend,²⁰

Ay eftir wer pees is the finall end.
Quharfor ye suld off yow gret malice ces;

The end off wer is cheryte and pes.

Pees is in hevyn, with blyss and lestand-
nas.²¹

We sall beseke the Pape, off his hie grace,
Till commaund pes, sen we may do na

mar.'

'Madeym,' he said, 'or your purches²² cum
thar, 110

Mendys we think off Ingland for to haiff.'
'Qubat set yow thus,' scho said, 'so God

yow saiff,

Fra violent wer at ye lik nocht to duell?'²³
'Madem,' he said, 'the suth I sall yow tell.

Eftir the dayt off Alexandris ryng,²⁴
Our land stud thre yer desolate but²⁵ king,

Kepyt full weyll at concord in gud stait.
Throuh twa clemyt,²⁶ thar hapnyt gret de-

baith,

So ernystfully, accord thaim nocht thai can.
Your king thai ast for to be thair ourman.²⁷

Slely²⁸ he slayd²⁹ throuh strenthis³⁰ off
Scotland: 121

The kynryk³¹ syne he tuk in his awn hand.
He maid a kyng agayn our rycht wys law;

For he of him suld hald the regioun aw.³²
Contrar this band was all the haill barn-

age,³³

For Scotland was yeit nevir in to thrill-
age.³⁴ 130

Gret Julius, that tribute gat off aw,
His wynnyng was in Scotland bot full smaw.

Than your fals king, undyr colour but mar,³⁵
Throuh band³⁶ he maid till Bruce that is

our ayr,³⁷

15 if. 16 truce. 17 threat. 18 perforce. 19 Warily.
20 shown. 21 lastingness. 22 solicitation. 23 stop.

24 reign. 25 without. 26 Because two claimed the
crown. 27 umpire. 28 cunningly. 29 slid. 30 strong-

holds. 31 kingdom. 32 all. 33 baronage. 34 thralldom.
35 under pretense without more. 36 bond. 37 heir.

Through all Scotland with gret power thai
raid,
Undyr that king quhilk he befor had maid.
To Bruce sen syne¹ he kepit na connand:²
He said, he wald nocht ga and conqness land
Till othir men; and thus the cas befell.
Than Scotland throuch he demayned³ him-
sell;
Slew our elderis, gret pete was to se.
In presone syne lang tyme thai pynit⁴ me,
Quhill I fra thaim was eastyn out for ded.
Thankit be God he send me sum remed!¹⁴⁰
Vengyt to be I prevyt⁵ all my mycht;
Feyll⁶ off thair kyn to dede syn I haiff
dycht.⁷
The rage off youth gert me desyr a wyff;
That rewit I sayr,⁸ and will do all my liff.
A tratour knycht but mercy gert hyr de,
Ane Hessilryg, bot⁹ for despit off me.
Than rang¹⁰ I furth in cruell wer and payn,
Quhill we redemyt part off our land agayn.
Than your curst king desyryt off us a trew;¹¹
Quhilk maid Scotland full rathly¹² for to
rew.¹⁵⁰
In to that pess thai set a suttell ayr,¹⁸
Than thairv scour to dede thai hangit thar,
At noblis war, and worthi off renoun;
Off cot armys¹⁴ eldest in that regioun.
Thar dede¹⁵ we think to veng in all our
mycht.
The woman als, that dulfully was dycht,¹⁶
Out off my mynd that dede will nevir bid,
Quhill God me tak fra this fals world so wid.
Off Sotheroun syn I can no pete haiff;
Your men in wer I think nevir mor to saiff.
The breith¹⁷ teris, was gret payn to behald,
Bryst fra his eyn, be¹⁸ he his tail had tald.
The queyn wepyt for pete off Wallace.¹⁶³
'Allace,' scho said, 'wa worth the curssynt
cace!
In wayrit¹⁹ tym that Hesilryg was born!
Mony worthi throuch his deid ar forlorn.
He suld haiff payn, that saikles²⁰ sic ane
slench;²¹
England sen syn has boucht it der enewch,
Thocht scho had beyn a queyn or a pryn-
sace.'
'Madem,' he said, 'as God giff me gud
grace,¹⁷⁰

Prynsace or queyn, in quhat stait so thai be,
In till hir tym scho was als der to me.'
'Wallace,' scho said, 'off this talk we will
ces;
The mendis²² heroff is gud prayer and pes.'
'I grant,' he said, 'off me as now na
mayr;
This is rycht nocht bot ekyng²³ off our
cayr.'
The queyn fand weyll, langage no thing
hyr bet;²⁴
Scho trowit with gold that he mycht be our
set.²⁵
Thre thousand pound, off fynest gold so
red,
Scho gert²⁶ be brocht to Wallace in that
sted.¹⁸⁰
'Madeym,' he said, 'na sic tribut we craiff:
A nothir mendis we wald off Ingland haiff,
Or²⁷ we ratur fra this regioun agayn,
Off your fals blud that has our elderis
slayn.
For all the gold and ryches ye in ryng,²⁸
Ye get no pes, bot²⁹ desir off your king.'
Quhen scho saw weill gold mycht hyr nocht
releiff,
Sum part in sport scho thought him for to
preiff.
'Wallace,' scho said, 'yhe war clepyt my
luff!⁸⁰
Mor baundounly³¹ I maid me for to pruff;³²
Traistand³³ tharfor your rancour for to
slak;¹⁹¹
Me think ye suld do sum thing for my
saik.'
Rycht wysly he maid ansuer to the queyn;
'Madem,' he said, 'and³⁴ verite war seyn,
That ye me luffyt, I awcht³⁵ yow luff
agayn.
Thir wordis all ar no thing bot in vayn.
Sic luff as that is nothing till avance,
To tak a lak,³⁶ and syne get no plesance.
In spech off luff suttell ye Sotheroun ar;
Ye can ws mok, suppos ye se no mar.'²⁰⁰
'In London,' scho said, 'for yow I suf-
feryt blaym;
Our consall als will lauch quhen we cum
hayn.
So may thai say, wemen ar fers³⁷ off thoct
To seke frendship, and syne can get rycht
nocht!'

¹ since then. ² covenant. ³ domineered. ⁴ tor-
tured. ⁵ proved, tried. ⁶ Many. ⁷ done to death.
⁸ I rued sorely. ⁹ only. ¹⁰ raged. ¹¹ truce. ¹² soon.
¹³ In that peace they held a crafty court of justice.
¹⁴ coat-armor. ¹⁵ Their death. ¹⁶ grievously was
treated. ¹⁷ angry. ¹⁸ before. ¹⁹ cursed. ²⁰ in-
nocent. ²¹ slew.

²² amends, remedy. ²³ increase. ²⁴ helped. ²⁵ won
over. ²⁶ caused. ²⁷ ere. ²⁸ reign in. ²⁹ without.
³⁰ called my love. ³¹ recklessly. ³² caused myself
to try. ³³ trusting. ³⁴ if. ³⁵ should owe. ³⁶ play-
thing. ³⁷ eager.

'Madem,' he said, 'we wait¹ how ye ar send;

Yhe trow we haiff bot litill for to spend.
Fyrst with your gold, for ye ar rych and wys,

Yhe wald us blynd, sen Scottis ar so nys;²

Syn plesand wordis off you and ladyis fayr,
As quha suld dryff the byrdis till a swar³ 210

With the small pype, for it most fresche will call.

Madem, as yit ye ma nocht tempt us all.
Gret part off gud is left amang our kyn;
In Ingland als we fynd enewch to wyn.
Abayssyt⁴ scho was to mak ansuer him till.
'Der schyr,' scho said, 'sen this is at your will;

Wer or pes, quhat so yow likis best,
Lat your hye witt and gud consaill degest.'⁵
'Madem,' he said, 'now sall ye undirstand
The resoune quhy that I will mak na band. 220

With yow, ladyis, I can na trewis bynd;
For your fals king her eftir sone wald fynd,

Quhen he saw tyme, to brek it at his will;
And playnly say, he grantyt⁶ nocht thar-till.

Than had we nayn bot ladyis to reupff.
That sall he nocht, be God that is abuff.
Upon wemen I will no wer begyn;
On you in faith no worschip is to wyn.⁷
All the hail pass⁸ apon him self he sall tak,

Off pees or wer quhat hapnyt we to mak.⁹ 230

The queyn grantyt his ansuer sufficient;
So dyd the layff⁹ in place that was present.
His delyverance¹⁰ thai held off gret avail,
And stark enewch to schaw to thair consaill.

Wa was the qweyn hyr travail helpyt nocht.

The gold scho tuk, that thai had with hyr brocht,

In to the ost rycht frely scho it gayff,
Till eniryk man that likyt for till haiff.
Till menstraillis, harroldis, scho delt ha-boundanle,

Besekand¹¹ thaim hyr frend at thai wald be. 240

Quhen Wallace saw the fredom¹² off the queyn,

Sadly he said; 'The suth weyll has beyn seyn,

Wemen may tempt the wysest at is wrocht.¹³
Your gret gentrice it sall nevir be for nocht.

We yow assure, our ost sall muff na thing,¹⁴
Quhyll¹⁵ tym ye may send message fra your king.

Gyff it be sa at he accord and we,
Than for your saik it sall the bettir be.
Your Harroldys als sal saiffly cum and ga;
For your fredom we sall trowbill na ma.¹⁵⁰

Scho thankit him off his grant mony sys,¹⁶
And all the ladyis apon a gudly wys.

Glaidly thai drank, the queyn and gud Wallace;

Thir ladyis als, and lordis in that place.
Hyr leyff scho tuk with out langar abaid;
Fyve myle that nycht south till a nonry¹⁷ raid.

Apon the morn till London passit thai,
In Westmenster, quhar at the consaill lay:
Wallace ansuer scho gart schaw to the king.

It nedis nocht her rabers¹⁸ mar off this thing. 260

The gret commend that scho to Wallace gaiff,

Befor the king, in presens off the laiff,
Till trow Scottis it suld gretly apples,¹⁹
Thocht Inglismen tharoff had litill es;²⁰

Off worschip, wyt, manheid, and governans,
Off fredom, trewth; key off remembrans;
Scho callyt him thar in to thair hye presens;
Thocht contrar thaim he stud at his defens.

'So chyftaynlik,' scho said, 'as he is seyn,
In till Inglande, I trow, has nevir beyn. 270
Wald ye off gold gyff him this rewmys²¹ rent,

Fra honour he will nocht turn his entent.
Sufferyt we ar, quhill ye may message mak;

Off wys lordis sum part I reid²² yow tak,
To purches pees, with outyn wordis mar;
For all Ingland may rew his raid full sayr.
Your harroldys als²³ to pass to him has leyff,

In all his ost thar sall no man thaim greiff.'

¹ know. ² foolish. ³ snare. ⁴ Abashed. ⁵ settle.
⁶ agreed. ⁷ no honor is to be won. ⁸ responsibility.
⁹ rest. ¹⁰ speech. ¹¹ beseeching.

¹² generosity. ¹³ that is made. ¹⁴ our host shall
not move at all. ¹⁵ Till. ¹⁶ times. ¹⁷ nunnery.
¹⁸ repeat. ¹⁹ please. ²⁰ ease, comfort. ²¹ realm's.
²² advise. ²³ also.

Than thankit thai the queyn for hir tra-
vaille;
The king, and lordis that was off his con-
sail. ²⁸⁰
Off hyr ansuer the king applessit was;
Than thre gret lordys thai ordand for to
pass.
Thar consaill haill has fownd it was the best
Trewis to tak, or ellis thai get no rest.

LAMENT FOR WALLACE'S CAPTURE

(xi, 1109-28)

ALLACE, Scotland, to quhom sall thow
compleyn!
Allace, fra payn quha sall the now re-
streyn!
Allace, thi help is fastlie brocht to ground,
Thi best chyftane in braith¹ bandis is
bound!
Allace, thow has now lost thi gyd off lycht!
Allace, quha sall defend the in thi rycht?
Allace, thi payn approchis wondyr ner,
With sorow sone thow mon bene² set in
feyr!
Thi gracious gyd, thi grettast governour,
Allace, our³ neir is cumyn his fatell hour!¹⁰
Allace, quha sall the beit⁴ now off thi
bail?⁵
Allace, quhen sall off harmys thow be haill?
Quha sal the defend? quha sall the now
mak fre?
Allace, in wer quha sall thi helpar be?
Quha sall the help? quha sall the now
radem?⁶
Allace, quha sall the Saxons fra the flem?⁷
I can no mar, bot besek God off grace
The to restor in haist to rychtwysnace;⁸
Sen gud Wallace may succour the no mar.
The loss off him encressit mekill cair. ²⁰

THE DEATH OF WALLACE

(xi, 1305-1406)

On Wednysday the fals Sotheroun furth
brocht,
Till martyr him as thai befor had wrocht.
Rycht suth it is, a martyr was Wallace,
Als Osauld, Edmunt, Eduuard, and
Thomas.

¹ violent. ² must be. ³ too. ⁴ cure thee. ⁵ harm.
• redcem. ⁶ banish. ⁷ righteousness.

Off men in armes led him a full gret rout.
With a bauld spreit gud Wallace blent⁹
about:

A preyst he askyt, for God at deit¹⁰ on tre.
King Eduuard than cummandyt his clerge,
And said; 'I charge, apayn¹¹ off loss off
lyve,

Nane be sa bauld yon tyrand for to
schryve. ¹⁰

He has rong¹² lang in contrar my hienace.¹³
A blyst byschop sone, present in that place,
Off Canterbury he than was rychtwys lord,
Agayn the king he maid this rycht record;
And said; 'My selff sall her his confes-
sioun,

Gyff I haiff mycht, in contrar off thi croun.
And¹⁴ thou throu force will stop me off this
thing,

I vow to God, quhilk is my rychtwys king,
That all Ingland I sall her enterdyt, ¹⁹
And mak it knawin thou art ane herretyk.
The sacrement of kyrk I sall him geiff;
Syn¹⁵ tak thi chos, to sterve¹⁶ or lat him
leiff.¹⁷

It war mar waill,¹⁸ in worschip off thi croun,
To kepe sic ane in lyff in thi bandoun,¹⁹
Than all the land and gud at thow has
refyd.²⁰

Bot covatice the ay fra honour drefyd.²¹
Thow has thi lyff rongyn²² in wrangwis
deid;

That sall be seyn on the, or on thi seid.
The king gert²³ charge thai suld the byschop
ta;²⁴

Bot sad²⁵ lordys consellyt to lat him ga. ³⁰
All Inglismen said, at his desyr was rycht;
To Wallace than he rakyt²⁶ in thar sicht,
And sadly hard his confessioun till ane end.
Humbly to God his spreit he thar comend,
Lawly him servyt with hartlye devocioun
Apon his kneis, and said ane orysoun.
His leyff he tuk, and to West monastery²⁷
raid.

The lokmen²⁸ than thai bur Wallace but
baid²⁹

On till a place, his martyrdom to tak;
For till his ded he wald no forthyr³⁰ mak. ⁴⁰
Fra the fyrst nycht he was tane in Scotland,
Thai kepyt him in to that sammyn³¹ band.

⁹ looked. ¹⁰ who died. ¹¹ on pain. ¹² reigned.
¹³ highness. ¹⁴ if. ¹⁵ then. ¹⁶ perish. ¹⁷ give him
permission. ¹⁸ avail, advantage. ¹⁹ at thy mercy.
²⁰ robbed. ²¹ drove. ²² reigned. ²³ gave. ²⁴ take.
²⁵ serious. ²⁶ went. ²⁷ Westminster. ²⁸ execu-
tioners. ²⁹ bore Wallace without delay. ³⁰ help.
³¹ same.

Na thing he had at suld haiff doyn¹ him
gud;
Bot Inglismen him servit off carnaill fud.
Hys worldly lyff desyrd the sustenance,
Thocht he it gat in contrar off plesance.
Thai thirty dayis his band thai durst nocht
slaik,
Quhill he was bundyn on a skamyll off
ayk,²
With irn chenyais³ that was bath stark and
keyn.
A clerk thai set to her quhat he wald
meyn,⁴
'Thow Scot,' he said, 'that gret wrangis
has don,
Thi fatell hour, thow seis, approchis son.
Thow suld in mynd remembyr thi mysdeid,
At clerkis may, quhen thai thair psalmis
reid
For Crystyn saullis, that makis thaim to
pray,
In thair nowmyr⁵ thow may be ane off
thai;
For now thow seis on fors thou mon de-
cess.'⁶
Than Wallace said; 'For all thi roid ra-
herss,⁷
Thow has na charge,⁸ suppos at I did myss;
Yon blyst byschop has hecht⁹ I sall haiff
blis;
And I trew weill, at God sall it admyt:
Thi febyll wordis sall nocht my conscience
smyt.
Conford I haiff off way that I suld gang,
Maist payn I feill at I bid her our lang.'¹⁰
Than said the clerk; 'Our king oft send
the till;
Thow mycht haiff had all Scotland at thi
will,
To hald off him, and cessyt off thi stryff;
So as a lord rongyn¹¹ furth all thi lyff.'
Than Wallace said; 'Thou spekis off
mychty thing.
Had I lestylt,¹² and gottyn my rycht wys
king,

¹ that should have done. ² bench of oak. ³ iron chains. ⁴ moan. ⁵ number. ⁶ decease. ⁷ rude speech. ⁸ authority. ⁹ promised. ¹⁰ that I abide here too long. ¹¹ reigned. ¹² continued.

Fra worthi Bruce had rasavit his croun,
I thoct haiff maid Ingland at his bandoun.¹³
So uttraly it suld beyn¹⁴ at his will,
Quhat plessyt him, to sauft thi king or
spill.'¹⁵
'Weill,' said the clerk, 'than thow repentis
nocht:
Off wykkydness thow has a felloun thoct.
Is nane in warld at has sa mony slane;
Tharfor till ask, me think thow suld be
bane,¹⁶
Grace off our king, and syn at his barnage.'¹⁷
Than Wallace smyld a litill at his langage.¹⁸
'I grant,' he said, 'part Inglismen I slew
In my quarrel, me thoct nocht halff enew.
I mowyt¹⁹ na wer bot for to win our awin;²⁰
To God and man the rycht full weill is
knawin.
Thi frustyr²¹ wordis dois nocht bot taris me,
I the commaund, on Goddis halff,²² lat me
be.'
A schyrray gart²³ this clerk son fra him
pass;
Rycht as thai durst, thai grant quhat he
wald as.²⁴
A Psaltyr buk Wallace had on him evir;
Fra his childeid fra it wald nocht desevir.²⁵²⁶
Bettyr he trowit in viage for to speid.
Bot than he was dispalyeid²⁷ off his weid.
This grace he ast at lord Clyffurd that
knycht,
To lat him haiff his Psaltyr buk in sycht.
He gert a preyst it oppyn befor him hauld,
Quhill thai till him had done all at thai
wauld.
Stedfast he red, for ocht thai did him thar:
Feyll²⁸ Sotheroun said, at Wallace feld na
sair.²⁹
Gud devocioun sa was his begynnyng,
Conteynd tharwith, and fair was his end-
yng;
Quhill spech and spreyt at anys all can
fayr³⁰
To lestand³¹ blyss, we trow, for evirmayr.

¹³ in his power. ¹⁴ should have been. ¹⁵ destroy. ¹⁶ ready. ¹⁷ then from his baronage. ¹⁸ moved. ¹⁹ own. ²⁰ vain. ²¹ for God's sake. ²² sheriff caused. ²³ ask. ²⁴ part. ²⁵ despoiled. ²⁶ many. ²⁷ felt no pain. ²⁸ did go. ²⁹ lasting.

JAMES I OF SCOTS

THE KING'S QUAIR¹

HEIGH in the hevynnis figure circulere²
 The rody sterrës twynklyng as the fyre;
 And, in Aquary,³ Cinthia⁴ the clere,
 Rynsid hir tressis like the golden wyre,
 That late tofore, in faire and fresche
 atyre,
 Through Capricorn heved hir hornis bright,
 North northward approchit the myd-nyght;⁵

Quhen, as I lay in bed allone waking,
 New partit⁶ out of slepe a lyte tofore,⁷
 Fell me to mynd of many diverse thing,¹⁰
 Off this and that; can I noght say quhar-
 fore,
 Bot slepe for craft in erth⁸ myght I no
 more;
 For quhich as tho⁹ coude I no better wyle,¹⁰
 Bot toke a boke to rede apon a quhile:

Off quhich the name is clepit¹¹ properly
 Boece, eftre him that was the compiloure,
 Schewing [the] counsele of philosophye,
 Compilt by that noble senatoure
 Off Rome, quhilom¹² that was the warl-
 dis floure,
 And from estate by fortune [for] a quhile²⁰
 Forjugit¹³ was to povert¹⁴ in exile:

And there, to here this worthy lord and clerk,
 His metir suete, full of moralitee;
 His flourit pen so fair he set a-werk,
 Discryving¹⁵ first of his prosperitee,
 And out of that his infelicittee;
 And than how he, in his poetly report,¹⁶
 In philosophy can him to confort.¹⁷

For quhich, (thogh¹⁸ I, in purpose, at my
 boke,
 To borowe a slepe at thilkë¹⁹ tyme be-
 gan),³⁰

Or ever I stent,²⁰ my best was more to loke
 Upon the writing of this noble man,
 That in him-self the full recover wan
 Off his infortune, povert, and distresse,
 And in tham set his verray sekernesse.²¹

And so the vertew of his youth before
 Was in his age the ground of his delytis:
 Fortune the bak him turnyt, and therefore
 He maketh joye and comfort, that he
 quit is
 Off thir unsekir²² warldis appetitis; 40
 And so aworth²³ he takith his penance,
 And of his vertew maid it suffisance:

With mony a noble resoun, as him likit,
 Enditing in his fairë Latyne tong,
 So full of fruyte, and rethorikly pykit,²⁴
 Quhich to declare my scole²⁵ is ouer yong;
 Therefore I lat him pas, and, in my tong,²⁶
 Proceede I will agin to my sentence
 Off my mater, and leve all incidence.

The longë nyght beholding, as I saide, 50
 Myn eyën gan to smert for studying;
 My buke I schet, and at my hede it laide;
 And down I lay bot²⁷ ony taryng,
 This matere newë in my mynd rolling;
 This is to seyne²⁸ how that eche estate,
 As Fortune lykith, thame will [oft] trans-
 late.

For sothe it is, that, on hir tolter²⁹ quhele,
 Every wight cleverith in his stage,³⁰
 And failyng foting oft, quhen hir lest rele,³¹
 Sum up, sum down, is non estate nor age 60
 Ensured, more the prynce [nor] than
 the page:

So uncouthly hir werdës³² sche devidith,
 Namly³³ in youth, that seildin³⁴ ought pro-
 vidith.

¹ book. ² dome, firmament. ³ Aquarius. ⁴ MS. *Citherea*. ⁵ meridian. ⁶ roused. ⁷ a little before. ⁸ by any earthly means. ⁹ then. ¹⁰ knew I no better device. ¹¹ called. ¹² once. ¹³ Condemned. ¹⁴ poverty. ¹⁵ Describing. ¹⁶ narrative. ¹⁷ did comfort. ¹⁸ though. ¹⁹ that.

²⁰ stopped. ²¹ security. ²² these uncertain. ²³ at its value. ²⁴ chosen. ²⁵ skull, brain. ²⁶ own language. ²⁷ without. ²⁸ say. ²⁹ unstable. ³⁰ clammers in his rank. ³¹ when she pleases to reel. ³² So strangely her fates. ³³ Especially. ³⁴ seldom.

Among thir thoughtis rolling to and fro,
Fell me to mynd of my fortune and
ure;¹

In tender youth how sche was first my fo,
And eft² my frende, and how I gat
recure

Off my distresse, and all myn aventure
I gan oure-hayle,³ that langer slepe ne
rest

Ne myght I nat, so were my wittis
wrest.⁴ 70

For-wakit and for-walowit,⁵ thus musing,
Wery, forlyin,⁶ I lestnyt sodaynlye,
And sone I herd the bell to matyns ryng,
And up I rase, no langer wald I lye:

Bot now, how trowe ye? suich a fantasye
Fell me to mynd, that ay methoght the
bell

Said to me, 'Tell on, man, quhat the be-
fell.'

Thoght I tho⁷ to my-self, 'Quhat may this
be?

This is myn awin ymagynacioun;
It is no lyf⁸ that spekis unto me; 80

It is a bell, or that impressioun
Off my thocht causith this illusioun,

That dooth me think so nyce⁹ly⁹ in this
wise;

And so befell as I schall you devise.¹⁰

Determyt furth therewith in myn entent,
Sen I thus have ymagynit of this soun,

And in my tyme more ink and paper spent
To lyte effect, I take conclusioun

Sum newe thing to write; I set me doun,
And furth-with-all my pen in hand I take,

And maid a ✠, and thus begouth¹¹ my
buke. 91

Thou [sely]¹² youth, of nature indegest,¹³
Unrypit fruyte with windis variable;

Like to the bird that fed is on the nest,
And can noght flee; of wit wayke and
unstable,

To fortune both and to infortune hable;¹⁴
Wist thou thy payne to cum and thy tra-
vaill,

For sorow and drede wele myght thou wepe
and waille.

1 luck. 2 afterwards. 3 recalled. 4 tortured.
5 Worn out with waking and tossing. 6 tired with
lying. 7 then. 8 person. 9 maketh me think so
foolishly. 10 describe. 11 began. 12 innocent.

13 crude. 14 liable.

Thus stant¹⁵ thy confort in unsekernesse,
And wantis it that suld the reule and
gye: ¹⁶ 100

Ryght as the schip that sailith sterēles¹⁷
Upon the rok[kis] most to harmēs hye,¹⁸

For lak of it that suld bene hir sup-
plye;¹⁹

So standis thou here in this warldis rage,
And wantis that suld gyde all thy viage.²⁰

I mene this by my-self, as in partye;²¹
Though nature gave me suffisance²² in
youth,

The rypenesse of resoun lak[it] I
To governe with my will; so lyte I couth,²³

Quhen sterēles to travaile I begouth,²⁴
Among the wawis of this world to drive;

And how the case, anon I will discrive. 112

With doubtfull hert, among the rokkis
blake,

My feble bote full fast to stere and rowe,
Helples allone, the wynter nyght I wake,

To wayte the wynd that furthward suld
me throwe.²⁵

O empti saile! quhare is the wynd suld
blowe

Me to the port, quhar gynneth all my
game?

Help, Calyope, and wynd, in Marye name!

The rokkis clepe²⁶ I the prolixitee ¹²⁰
Off doubilnesse that doith²⁷ my wittis
pall:

The lak of wynd is the deficultee
In enditing of this lytill trety small:

The bote I clepe the mater hole of all:
My wit, unto the saile that now I wynd²⁸

To seke connyng,²⁹ though I bot lytill fynd.

At my begynnnyng first I clepe and call
To yow, Cleo, and to yow, Polymye,

With Thesiphone,³⁰ goddis and sistris all,
In nowmer ix., as bokis specifye; ¹³⁰

In this processe my wilsum³¹ wittis gye;
And with your bryght lanternis wele con-
voye

My pen, to write my turment and my joye!

15 stands. 16 guide. 17 helmless. 18 must hasten
to harm. 19 help. 20 voyage. 21 mean this re-
garding myself, partly. 22 sufficient rank and means.

23 To govern my will with; so little I could. 24 began.
25 drive. 26 call. 27 maketh. 28 unfurl. (?)

29 skill. On this whole passage cf. Chaucer's *Troilus*,
Bk. II., Proem.

30 Tisiphone, a Fury. James, misled by a passage in
Chaucer's *Troilus*, takes her for a Muse. 31 wilful.

In vere,¹ that full of vertu is and gude,
 Quhen Nature first begynneth hir enprise,
 That quihlum was be cruell frost and flude
 And schouris scharp opprest in many weye,
 And Synthius² [be]gynneth to aryse
 Heigh in the est—a morow³ soft and
 suete —
 Upward his course to drive in Ariete: 140

Passit mydday bot fourë grëis evin,⁴
 Off lenth and brede his angel wingis
 bryght
 He spred upon the ground down fro the
 hevin;
 That, for gladnesse and confort of the
 sight,
 And with the tiklyng of his hete and
 light,
 The tender flouris opnyt thame and sprad;
 And, in thaire nature, thankit him for glad.

Noght fere passit the state of innocence,
 Bot nere about the nowmer of yeris
 thre,⁵
 Were it causit throu heviny influence 150
 Off Goddis will, or othir casualtee,
 Can I noght say; bot out of my contree,
 By thaire avise that had of me the cure,
 Be see to pas, take I myn aventure.

Purvait of all that was us necessarye,
 With wynd at will, up airly by the morowe,
 Streight unto schip, no longere wold we
 tarye,
 The way we tuke, the tyme I tald to-
 forowe; ⁶
 With mony 'fare wele' and 'Sanet Iohne
 to borowe' ⁷
 Off falowe and frende; and thus with one
 assent 160
 We pullit up saile, and furthoure wayis
 went.

Upon the wawis weltering to and fro,
 So infortunate was us that fremyt⁸ day,
 That maugre, playnly, quhethir we wold or
 no,
 With strong hand [as] by forse, schortly
 to say,
 Off inymis takin and led away
 We werën all, and broght in thaire contree;
 Fortune it schupe⁹ non othir wayis to be.

¹ spring. ² Cynthius, the sun. ³ in the morning.
⁴ degrees exactly (i.e. one hour). ⁵ i.e., about ten
 years old. ⁶ before. ⁷ for your protection.
⁸ strange, hostile. ⁹ destined.

Quhare as in strayte ward and in strong
 prisoun,
 So fer-forth,¹⁰ of my lyf the hevye lyne, 170
 Without confort, in sorowe abandoun,
 The second sistere lukit hath to twyne,¹¹
 Nere by the space of yeris twise nyne;
 Till Iupiter his merci list advert,¹²
 And send confort in relesche¹³ of my smert.

Quhare as in ward full oft I wold bewaille
 My dedely lyf, full of peyne and penance,
 Saing ryght thus, 'Quhat have I gilt, to
 faille ¹⁴
 My fredome in this world and my ple-
 sance?
 Sen every wight has thereof suffisance,
 That I behold, and I a créature 181
 Put from all this—hard is myn aventure!

'The bird, the beste, the fisch eke in the see,
 They lyve in fredome, everich¹⁵ in his
 kynd;
 And I a man, and lakkith libertee;
 Quhat schall I seyne,¹⁶ quhat resoun
 may I fynd,
 That Fortune suld do so?' Thus in my
 mynd
 My folk I wold argewe,¹⁷ bot all for noght;
 Was non that myght, that on my peynës
 rough.¹⁸

Than wold I say, 'Gif¹⁹ God me had de-
 visit 190
 To lyve my lyf in thraldome thus and
 pyne,
 Quhat was the cause that he [me] more
 comprisit²⁰
 Than othir folk to lyve in suich ruine?
 I suffer allone among the figuris nyne,²¹
 Ane wofull wrecche that to no wight may
 spede,²²
 And yit of euery lyvis²³ help hath nede.'

The longë dayës and the nyghtis eke
 I wold bewaille my fortune in this wise,
 For quhich, agane distresse confort to seke,
 My custum was on mornis for to ryse 200
 Airly as day; O happy exercise!
 By the come I to joye out of turment.

Bot now to purpose of my first entent: —
¹⁰ far forward. ¹¹ i.e., Lachesis, spinner of life's
 thread, has seen to the spinning of mine. ¹² pleased
 to turn. ¹³ relief. ¹⁴ How have I sinned so as to lose.
¹⁵ every one. ¹⁶ say. ¹⁷ argue with. ¹⁸ recked.
¹⁹ If. ²⁰ included me more. ²¹ i.e., I am like a
 cipher, of no value to others and needing the help of
 every one. ²² give help. ²³ person's.

Bewailing in my chamber thus allone,
 Despeired of all joye and remedye,
 For-tirit of my thought,¹ and wo begone,
 [Un]to the wyndow gan I walk in hye,
 To se the warld and folk that went forby;²
 As for the tyme, though I of mirthis fude
 Myght have no more, to luke it did me
 gude. 210

Now was there maid fast by the touris wall
 A gardyn faire, and in the corneris set
 Ane herbere³ grene:— with wandis long
 and small
 Railit about; and so with treis set
 Was all the place, and hawthorn begis knet,
 That lyf⁴ was none walking there forby,
 That myght within scarse ony wight aspye.

So thik the bewis⁵ and the levës grene
 Beschadit all the aleyes that there were,
 And myddis every herbere myght be sene 220
 The scharpë grenë suetë jeneperë,⁶
 Growing so faire with branchis here and
 there,

That, as it semyt to a lyf⁷ without,
 The bewis spred the herbere all about;

And on the smallë grenë twistis⁸ sat
 The lytill suetë nyghtingale, and song
 So loud and clere, the ymnis⁹ consecrat
 Off lufis use,¹⁰ now soft, now lowd among,
 That all the gadyng and the wallis rong
 Ryght of thaire song and of the copill¹¹
 next 230
 Off thaire suete armony, and lo the text:

CANTUS

‘Worschippë, ye that loveris bene, this May,
 For of your blisse the kalendis are be-
 gone,
 And sing with us, Away, winter, away!
 Cum, somer, cum, the suete sesoun and
 sonne!
 Awake for schame! that have your hev-
 ynnis wonne,
 And amorously lift up your hedis all,
 Thank lufe that list¹² you to his merci call.’

Quhen thai this song had song a lytill
 thrawe,¹³
 Thai stent¹⁴ a quhile, and therewith un-
 affraid, 240

As I beheld and kest myn eyne a-lawe,¹⁵
 From beugh to beugh thay hippit¹⁶ and
 thai plaid,
 And freschly in thaire birdis kynd arraid
 Thaire fetheris new, and fret¹⁷ thame in the
 sonne,
 And thankit lufe, that had thaire makis¹⁸
 wonne.

This was the planë ditee of thaire note,
 And there-with-all unto my-self I thought,
 ‘Quhat lyf¹⁹ is this that makis birdis dote?
 Quhat may this be, how cummyth it of
 ought?’²⁰
 Quhat nedith it to be so dere ybought? 250
 It is nothing, trowe I, bot feynit chere,
 And that men list to counterfeten chere.’

Eft²¹ wald I think; ‘O Lord, quhat may this
 be?’

That Lufe is of so noble myght and kynde,
 Lufing his folk, and suich prosperitee
 Is it of him, as we in bukis fynd?
 May he oure hertës setten²² and unbynd?
 Hath he upon oure hertis suich maistraye?
 Or all this is bot feynyt fantasye!

For gif he be of so grete excellence, 260
 That he of every wight hath cure and
 charge,
 Quhat have I gilt²³ to him or doon offense,
 That I am thrall, and birdis gone at large,
 Sen²⁴ him to serve he myght set my
 corage?
 And gif he be nocht so, than may I seyne,²⁵
 Quhat makis folk to jangill of him in veyue?

Can I nocht ellës fynd, bot gif that he
 Be lord, and as a god may lyve and regne,
 To bynd and louse, and maken thrallis free,
 Than wold I pray his blisfull grace
 benigne, 270
 To hable²⁶ me unto his service digne;²⁷
 And evermore for to be one of tho
 Him trewly for to serve in wele and wo.

And there-with kest I down myn eye ageyne,
 Quhare as I sawe, walking under the toure,
 Full secretly, new cummyn hir to pleyne,²⁸
 The fairest or the freschest yongë flourë
 That ever I sawe, me thought, before
 that houre,

¹ Tired out with brooding. ² past. ³ shrubbery.
⁴ person. ⁵ boughs. ⁶ juniper. ⁷ person. ⁸ twigs.
⁹ hymns. ¹⁰ liturgy. ¹¹ couplet, verse. ¹² is pleased.
¹³ time. ¹⁴ stopped.

¹⁵ below. ¹⁶ hopped. ¹⁷ adorned. ¹⁸ mates.
¹⁹ person. ²⁰ at all. ²¹ Again. ²² make fast.
²³ How have I sinned. ²⁴ Since. ²⁵ say. ²⁶ fit.
²⁷ worthy. ²⁸ play.

For quhich sodayn abate,¹ anon astert²
The blude of all my body to my hert. 280

And though I stude abaisit tho a lyte,
No wonder was; for-quhy my wittis all
Were so overcom with plesance and delyte,
Onely throu latting of myn eyen fall,
That sudaynly my hert became hir thrall
For ever, of free will; for of manace
There was no takyn in hir suetè face.

And in my hede I drewe ryght hastily,
And eft-sonès³ I lent it forth ageyne,
And sawe hir walk, that verray womanly, 290
With no wight mo, bot onely women
tueyne.

Than gan I studye in my-self, and seyne,
'A! suete, ar ye a warldly crèature,
Or heviny thing in likenesse of nature?

'Or ar ye god Cupidis owin princesse,
And cummyn are to louse me out of
band?

Or ar ye verray Nature the goddesses,
That have depaynted with your heviny
hand

This gardyn full of flouris, as they stand?
Quhat sall I think, allace! quhat reverence
Sall I min[i]ster to your excellence? 301

'Gif ye a goddesses be, and that ye like
To do me payne, I may it noght astert;⁴
Gif ye be warldly wight, that dooth me sike,⁵
Quhy lest⁶ God mak you so, my derrest
hert,

To do a sely⁷ prisoner thus smert,
That lufis yow all, and wote⁸ of noght bot
wo?

And therefor, merci, suete! sen it is so.'

Quhen I a lytill thrawe⁹ had maid my
moon, 309

Bewailing myn infortune and my chance,
Unknow[n][g] how or quhat was best to
doon,

So ferre I fallen [was] in lufis dance,
That sodeynly my wit, my contenance,
My hert, my will, my nature, and my mynd,
Was changit clene ryght in an-othir kynd.

Off hir array the form gif I sall write
Toward, hir goldin haire and rich atyre

¹ Shock. ² rushed. ³ soon after. ⁴ escape.
⁵ maketh me sigh. ⁶ Why pleased. ⁷ innocent.
⁸ knows. ⁹ while.

In fret-wise couchit¹⁰ [were] with perillis
quhite

And gretè balas lemyng¹¹ as the fyre,
With mony ane emeraut and faire saph-
ire; 320

And on hir hede a chaplet fresch of hewe,
Off plumys partit¹² rede, and quhite, and
blewe;

Full of quaking spangis bryght as gold,
Forgit of schap like to the amoretis,¹³
So new, so fresch, so plesant to behold,
The plumys eke like to the floure-
jonettis,¹⁴

And othir of schap like to the [round
crokettis],¹⁵

And, above all this, there was, wele I wote,
Beautee enuch to mak a world to dote.

About hir nek, quhite as the fyre amaille,¹⁶
A gudely cheyne of smale orfeverye,¹⁷ 331
Quhareby there hang a ruby, without faille,
Lyke to ane hertè schapin verily,
That, as a sperk of lowe,¹⁸ so wantonly
Semyt birnyng upon hir quhytè throte;
Now gif there was gud partye,¹⁹ God it wote!

And forto walk that freschè Mayès morowe,
An huke²⁰ sche had upon hirtissew²¹ quhite,
That gudeliare had noght bene sene to-
forowe,²²

As I suppose; and girt sche was a lyte. 340
Thus halflyng²³ louse for haste, to suich
delyte

It was to see hir youth in gudeliheide,
That for rudenes to speke thereof I drede.

In hir was youth, beautee, with humble
aport,²⁴

Bountee, riches, and wommanly fac-
ture,²⁵

(God better wote than my pen can report)
Wisedome, largesse, estate, and con-
nyng²⁶ sure.

In every poynt so guydit hir mesure,²⁷
In word, in dede, in schap, in contenance,
That nature myght no more hir childre
avance. 350

¹⁰ ornamentally trimmed. ¹¹ rubies glowing.
¹² variegated. ¹³ Uncertain. Perhaps love-knots.
¹⁴ great St. John's wort. ¹⁵ Skeat's conjecture: "a
sort of curled tuft." MS. repeats "floure-jonettis."
¹⁶ enamel made by fire. ¹⁷ goldsmith's work.
¹⁸ flame. ¹⁹ a good match. ²⁰ loose upper dress.
²¹ garment of rich stuff. ²² before. ²³ partly.
²⁴ demeanor. ²⁵ fashioning. ²⁶ skill.
²⁷ moderation guided her.

Throw quhich anon I knew and understude
 Wele, that sche was a warldly crëature;
 On quhom to rest myn eyë, so mich gude
 It did my wofull hert, I yow assure,
 That it was to me joye without mesure;
 And, at the last, my luke unto the hevyn
 I threwe furthwith, and said thir¹ versis
 sevin:

‘O Venus clere! of goddis stellifyit!²

To quhom I yelde homage and sacrificse,
 Fro this day forth your grace be magnifyit,³⁶⁰

That me ressavit have in suich [a] wise,
 To lyve under your law and do servise;
 Now help me furth, and for your merci lede
 My herte to rest, that dëis nere for drede.’

Quhen I with gude entent this orisoun
 Thus endit had, I stynt a lytill stound;⁸
 And eft⁴ myn eye full pitously adoun
 I kest, behalding unto hir lytill hound,
 That with his bellis playit on the ground;
 Than wold I say, and sigh there-with a
 lyte,³⁷⁰

‘A! wele were him that now were in thy
 plyte!’

An othir quhile the lytill nyghtingale,
 That sat upon the twiggis, wold I chide,
 And say ryght thus, ‘Quhare are thy notis
 smale,

That thou of love has song this morowe-
 tyde?

Seis thou noght hire that sittis the be-
 syde?

For Venus sake, the blisfull goddesse clere,
 Sing on agane, and mak my lady chere.

‘And eke I pray, for all the paynës grete,
 That, for the love of Froigne⁶ thy sister
 dere,³⁸⁰
 Thou sufferit quhilom,⁶ quhen thy brestis
 wete

Were with the terës of thyne eyën clere
 All bludy ronne; that pitee was to here
 The crueltee of that unkyghtly dede,
 Quhare was fro the bereft thy maidenhede,

‘Lift up thyne hert, and sing with gude
 entent;

And in thy notis suete the treson telle,

¹ these.

² made a star.

³ stopped a little space,

⁴ afterwards.

⁵ Progne, wife of Tereus, changed to a swallow.

⁶ once upon a time.

That to thy sister trewe and innocent
 Was kytbit⁷ by hir husband false and
 fell;

For quhois gilt, as it is worthy wel,³⁹⁰
 Chide thir husbandis that are false, I say,
 And bid thame mend, in the twenty devil
 way.⁸

‘O lytill wrecch, allace! maist thou noght se
 Quho commyth yond? Is it now tyme
 to wring?⁹

Quhat sory thought is fallin upon the?
 Opyñ thy throte; hastow no lest¹⁰ to sing?
 Allace! sen thou of reson had felyng,
 Now, suetë bird, say onës to me “pepe”;
 I dee for wo; me think thou gynniss slepe.

‘Hastow no mynde of lufe? Quhare is thy
 make?¹¹

Or artow seke, or smyt with jelousye?⁴⁰⁰
 Or is sche dede, or hath sche the forsake?
 Quhat is the cause of thy malancolye
 That thou no more list maken melodye?
 Sluggart, for schame! lo here thy goldin
 houre,

That worth were hale¹² all thy lyvis laboure!

‘Gyf thou suld sing wele ever in thy lyve,
 Here is, in fay,¹³ the tyme, and eke the
 space:

Quhat wostow than?¹⁴ sum bird may cum
 and stryve⁴⁰⁹

In song with the, the maistry to purchase.
 Suld thou than cesse, it were grete
 schame, allace!

And here, to wyn gree¹⁵ happily for ever,
 Here is the tyme to syng, or ellis never.’

I thought eke thus, gif I my handis clap,
 Or gif I cast,¹⁶ than will sche flee away;
 And gif I hald my pes, than will sche nap;
 And gif I crye, sche wate¹⁷ noght quat I
 say:

Thus, quhat is best, wate I nought be this
 day:

Bot blawe wynd, blawe, and do the levis
 schake,

That sum twig may wag, and make hir to
 wake.⁴²⁰

With that anon ryght sche toke up a sang,
 Quhare come anon mo¹⁸ birdis and alight;

⁷ shown. ⁸ in every possible way. ⁹ grieve.
¹⁰ desire. ¹¹ mate. ¹² wholly. ¹³ in faith. ¹⁴ What
 knowest thou then? ¹⁵ degree, superiority. ¹⁶ throw
 (anything). ¹⁷ knows. ¹⁸ more.

Bot than, to here the mirth was tham
amang,

Over that to,¹ to see the suetë sicht
Off hyr ymage, my spirit was so light,
Me thought I flawe² for joye without arest,
So were my wittis boundin all to fest.³

And to the notis of the philomene,
Quhilkis sche sang, the ditee there I maid
Direct to hire that was my hertis quene,⁴³⁰
Withoutin quhom no songis may me
glade;

And to that sanet, [there] walking in the
schade,
My bedis⁴ thus, with humble hert entere,
Devotly [than] I said on this manere.

'Quhen sall your merci rew upon your man,
Quhois service is yit uncouth⁵ unto yow?
Sen,⁶ quhen ye go, ther is noght ellis than
Bot, "Hert! quhere as⁷ the body may
noght throu,⁸

Folow yir hevin! Quho suld be glad bot
thou,
That such a gyde to folow has under-
take?⁴⁴⁰

Were it throu hell, the way thou noght
forsake!"⁹

And efter this, the birdis everichone¹⁰
Take up an othir sang full loud and clere,
And with a¹¹ voce said, 'Wele is us begone,¹²
That with oure makis are togider here;
We proyne¹³ and play without dout and
dangere,
All clothit in a soyte¹⁴ full fresch and newe,
In lufis service besy, glad, and trewe.

'And ye, fresche May, ay mercifull to bridis,¹⁵
Now welcum be ye, floure of monethis
all;⁴⁵⁰
For noght onely your grace upon us bydis,
Bot all the warld to witnes this we call,
That strowit hath so playnly over all
With newë freschë suete and tender grene,
Oure lyf, oure lust,¹⁶ oure governoure, oure
quene.'

This was thair song, as semyt me full heye,¹⁷
With full mony uncouth suete note and
schill,¹⁸

¹ Above that too. ² flew. ³ bound all too fast.
⁴ prayers. ⁵ unknown. ⁶ Since. ⁷ that. ⁸ go
through. ⁹ refuse thou not. ¹⁰ every one. ¹¹ one.
¹² Well is it with us. ¹³ preen. ¹⁴ one suit.
¹⁵ brides. ¹⁶ delight. ¹⁷ loud. ¹⁸ shrill.

And therewith-all that faire¹⁹ upward hir
eye

Wold cast amang,²⁰ as it was Goddis will,
Quhare I myght se, standing allane full
still,⁴⁶⁰

The faire facture²¹ that nature, for mais-
trye,²²

In hir visage wroght had full lufingly.

And, quhen sche walkit had a lytill thrawe
Under the suetë grenë bewis bent,
Hir faire fresche face, as quhite as ony
snaue,

Scho turnyt has, and furth hir wayis went;
Bot tho began myn axis²³ and turment,
To sene hir part,²⁴ and folowe I na myght;
Me thought the day was turnyt into nyght.

Than said I thus, 'Quhare[un]to lyve I
langer?⁴⁷⁰

Wofullest wicht, and subject unto payne!
Of payne? no! God wote, ya: for thay no
stranger

May wirken²⁵ ony wight, I dare wele
seyne.

How may this be, that deth and lyf, bothe
tueyne,

Sall bothe atonis²⁶ in a crëature
Togidder duell, and turment thus nature?

'I may noght ellis done bot wepe and waile,
With-in thir caldë wallis thus i-lokin;²⁷
From hennësfurth my rest is my travaile;
My dryë thrist with teris sall I slokin,²⁸⁴⁸⁰
And on my-self bene al my harmys
wrokin:²⁹

Thus bute³⁰ is none; bot³¹ Venus, of hir
grace,

Will schape³² remede, or do my spirit pace.³³

'As Tantalus I travaile, ay but-les,³⁴
That ever ylikë hailith at the well
Water to draw with buket botemles,
And may noght spede; quhois penance is
an hell:

So by³⁵ my-self this tale I may wele telle,
For unto hir that herith noght, I pleyne;
Thus like to him my travaile is in veyne.'⁴⁹⁰

So sore thus sight I with my-self allone,
That turnyt is my strenth in febilnesse,

¹⁹ fair one. ²⁰ at times. ²¹ feature, aspect. ²² as
a masterpiece. ²³ access of fever. ²⁴ see her depart.
²⁵ affect. ²⁶ at once. ²⁷ locked. ²⁸ slake.
²⁹ wreaked. ³⁰ remedy. ³¹ unless. ³² prepare.
³³ make my spirit pass. ³⁴ bootless. ³⁵ regarding.

My wele in wo, my frendis all in fone,¹
 My lyf in deth, my lyght into dirknesse,
 My hope in feere, in dout my sekirnesse;
 Sen sche is gone: and God mote² hir con-
 voye,
 That me may gyde to turment and to joye !

The long[ē] day thus gan I pryde and poure,
 Till Phiebus endit had his bemēs bryght,
 And bad go farewele every lef and floure,⁵⁰⁰
 This is to say, approach[en] gan the nyght,
 And Esperus his lampis gan to light;
 Quhen in the wyndow, still as any stone,
 I bade³ at lenth, and, kneling, maid my
 mone.

So lang till evin, for lak of myght and
 mynd,

For-wepit and for-pleynit⁴ pitously,
 Ourset so sorow had bothe hert and mynd,
 That to the coldē stone my hede on
 wrye⁵

I laid, and lent, amaisit verily,
 Half sleping and half suoun, in suich a
 wise;⁵¹⁰
 And quhat I met,⁶ I will you now devise.

Me thought that thus all sodeynly a lyght
 In at the wyndow come quhare that I
 lent,

Off quhich the chambere-wyndow schone
 full bryght,

And all my body so it hath ouerwent,
 That of my sight the vertew hale iblent;⁷
 And that with-all a voce unto me saide,
 'I bring the confort and hele,⁸ be noght
 affrayde.'

And furth anon it passit sodeynly,
 Quhere it come in, the ryghtē way
 ageyne,⁵²⁰

And sone, me thought, furth at the dure in
 hye⁹

I went my weye, nas nothing me ageyne;¹⁰
 And hastily, by bothe the armēs tueyne,
 I was araisit up in-to the aire,
 Clippit¹¹ in a cloude of cristall clere and
 faire.

Ascending upward ay fro spere to spere,
 Through aire and watre and the hotē
 fyre,

¹ foes. ² may. ³ abode. ⁴ Worn out with
 weeping and complaining. ⁵ awry. ⁶ dreamed.
⁷ wholly blinded. ⁸ healing. ⁹ haste. ¹⁰ there
 was nothing hindering me. ¹¹ Enclosed.

Till that I come unto the circle clere
 Off Signifere,¹² quhare fairē, bryght, and
 schire,¹³

The signis schone; and in the glade em-
 pire⁵³⁰

Off blisfull Venus, [quhar] ane cryit now
 So sudaynly, almost I wist noght how.

Off quhich the place, quhen [as] I com
 there nye,

Was all, me thought, of cristall stonis
 wrought,

And to the port I liftit was in hye,
 Quhare sodaynly, as quho sais¹⁴ at a thocht,
 It onpyt, and I was anon in broght
 Within a chamber, largē, rowm,¹⁵ and faire;
 And there I fand of peple grete repaire.¹⁶

This is to seyne, that present in that place
 Me thought I sawe of every nacioun⁵⁴¹

Loveris that endit [had] thaire lyfis space
 In lovis service, mony a mylioun,

Off quhois chancis¹⁷ maid is mencion
 In diverse bukis, quho thame list to se;
 And therefore here thaire namys lat I be.

The quhois aventure and grete labouris
 Aboue thaire hedis writin there I fand;

This is to seyne, martris and confessoris,
 Ech in his stage,¹⁸ and his make¹⁹ in his
 hand;⁵⁵⁰

And therewith-all thir peple sawe I stand,
 With mony a solemp[ni]t contenance,
 After²⁰ as lufe thame lykit to avance.

Off gudē folkis, that faire in lufe befill,²¹

There saw I sitt in order by thame one²²
 With hedis bore; and with thame stude
 Gude-will

To talk and play; and after that anon
 Besydis thame and next there saw I gone²³

Curage, among the freschē folkis yong,
 And with thame playit full merily and
 song.⁵⁶⁰

And in ane othir stage, endlong²⁴ the wall,
 There saw I stand, in capis wyde and lang,

A full grete nowmer; bot thaire hudis all,
 Wist I noght quhy, atoure²⁵ thair eyen
 hang;

And ay to thame come Repentance amang,²⁶

¹² i.e., the sphere of the zodiac. ¹³ clear. ¹⁴ as
 one may say. ¹⁵ spacious. ¹⁶ throng. ¹⁷ fortunes.
¹⁸ place. ¹⁹ mate. ²⁰ According. ²¹ were fortunate
 in love. ²² by themselves. ²³ go. ²⁴ along. ²⁵ over.
²⁶ at times: or perhaps here in modern sense.

And maid thame chere, degysit in his wede:¹
And dounward efter that yit I tuke hede;

Ryght overthwert² the chamber was there
drawe

A trevesse³ thin and quhite, all of ples-
ance, 569

The quhich behynd, standing, there I sawe
A world of folk, and by thaire contenance
Thaire hertis semyt full of displeasance,
With billis⁴ in thaire handis, of one assent
Unto the juge thaire playntis to present.

And there-with-all apperit unto me
A voce, and said, 'Tak hede, man, and
behold:

Yonder thou seis the hiest stage and gree⁵
Off agit folk, with hedis hore and olde;
Yone were the folke that never changē
wold

In lufe, bot trewly servit him alway, 580
In every age, unto thaire ending-day.

'For fro the tyme that thai coud understand
The exercise,⁶ of lufis craft the cure,
Was non on lyve⁷ that toke so moch on hand
For lufis sake, nor langer did endure
In lufis service; for, man, I the assure,
Quhen thay of youth ressavit had the fill,
Yit in thaire age tham lakkit no gude will.

'Here bene also of suich as in counsaillis 589
And all thar dedis, were to Venus trewe;
Here bene the princis, faucht the grete ba-
tailis,

In mynd⁸ of quhom ar maid the bukis
newe;

Here ben the poetis that the sciencis
knewe,
Throuout the world, of lufe in thaire suete
layes,

Suich as Ovide and Omere in thaire dayes.

And efter thame down in the nextē stage,
There as⁹ thou seis the yongē folkis
pleye:

Lo! thise were thay that, in thaire myddill
age,

Servandis were to lufe in mony weye,
And diversely happinnit for to deye; 600
Sum sorowfully, for wanting of thare makis,¹⁰
And sum in armis for thaire ladyes sakis.

'And othir eke by othir diverse chance,
As happin folk all day, as ye may se;
Sum for dispaire, without recoverance;
Sum for desyre, surmounting thaire de-
gree;

Sum for unkyndenes without a quhy;¹¹
Sum for to moch, and sum for jelousye.

'And efter this, upon yone stage adoun, 610
Tho that thou seis stond in capis wyde;
Yone were quhikum¹² folk of religioun,
That from the world thaire governance¹³
did hide,

And frely servit lufe on every syde
In secrete, with thaire bodyis and thaire
gudis.

And lo! quhy so thai hingen doun thaire
hudis:

'For though that thai were hardy at assay,¹⁴
And did him service quhikum prively,
Yit to the warldis eye it semyt nay; 619
So was thaire service half[del] cow-
ardy;¹⁵

And for thay first forsuke him opynly,
And efter that thereof had repenting,
For schame thaire hudis oure thaire eyne
thay hyng.

'And seis thou now yone multitude, on
rawe,¹⁶

Standing, behynd yone traverse of delyte?
Sum bene of tham that haldin were full lawe,
And take by frendis, nothing thay to
wyte,¹⁷

In youth from lufe into the cloistere quite;
And for that cause are cummyn recounsilit,¹⁸
On thame to pleyne that so tham had be-
gilit. 630

'And othir bene amongis thame also,
That cummyn ar to court, on lufe to
pleyne,¹⁹

For he thaire bodyes had bestowit so,
Quhare bothe thaire hertēs gruch[en]
ther-ageyne;²⁰

For quhich, in all thaire dayēs, soth to
seyne,²¹

Quhen othir lyvit in joye and [in] pleasance,
Thaire lyf was noght bot care and repent-
ance;

¹ disguised in dress. ² across. ³ curtain.
⁴ petitions. ⁵ degree. ⁶ practice. ⁷ alive. ⁸ mem-
ory. ⁹ Where. ¹⁰ mates.

¹¹ a why, a reason. ¹² once. ¹³ conduct. ¹⁴ stout
in trial. ¹⁵ half cowardice. ¹⁶ in a row. ¹⁷ blame.
¹⁸ restored (to their mates). ¹⁹ complain. ²⁰ repined
against it. ²¹ truth to say.

'And, quhare¹ thaire hertis gevin were and set,

Coplit with othir that coud nocht accord;
Thus were thai wrangit that did no forfeit,²

Departing³ thame that never wold discord;⁶⁴¹

Off yongē ladies faire, and mony lord,
That thus by maistry were fro thair chose dryve,⁴

Full redy were thaire playntis there to gyve.'

And othir also I sawe compleynnyng there
Upon Fortune and hir grete variance,
That quhere in love so wele they coplit were,

With thaire suete makis coplit in plesance,

Sche sodeynly maid thaire disseverance,
And tuke thame of this warldis companye,⁶⁵⁰

Withoutin cause, there was non othir quhy.⁶

And in a chierē of estate besyde,
With wingis bright, all plumyt bot his face,

There sawe I sitt the blyndē god Cupide,
With bow in hand, that bent full redy was,

And by him hang thre arowis in a cas,
Off quhich the hedis grundyn were full ryght,

Off diverse metals forgit faire and bryght.

And with the first, that hedit is of gold,
He smytis soft, and that has esy cure;⁶⁶⁰

The secund was of silver, mony fold
Wers than the first, and harder aventure;⁶

The thrid, of stele, is schot without re-cure;⁷

And on his longē yalow lokkis schene⁸
A chaplet had he all of levis grene.

And in a retrete lytill of compas,
Depeyntit⁹ all with sighis wonder sad,
Noght suich sighis as hertis doith man-ace¹⁰

Bot suich as dooth¹¹ lufaris to be glad,
Fond I Venus upon hir bed, that had⁶⁷⁰
A mantill cast over hir schuldris quhite:
Thus clothit was the goddesse of delyte.

¹ whereas. ² misdeed. ³ Separating. ⁴ driven from their choice. ⁵ reason. ⁶ fortune. ⁷ recovery. ⁸ bright. ⁹ Painted. ¹⁰ doth menace hearts. ¹¹ causeth.

Stude at the dure Fair-calling, hir uschere,
That coude his office doon in connyng wise,

And Secrettee, hir thrifty chamberere,
That besy was in tyme to do servise,
And othir mo¹² that I can nocht (on) avise;¹³

And on hir hede, of rede rosis full suete,
A chapellet sche had, faire, fresch, and mete.¹⁴

With quaking hert astonate of that sight,
Unnethis¹⁵ wist I qubat that I suld seyne;
Bot at the lastē febily, as I myght,⁶⁸²

With my handis on bothe my knēis tueyne,
There I begouth¹⁶ my caris to compleyne;
With ane humble and lamentable chere
Thus salute I that goddesse bryght and clere:

'Hye Quene of Lufe! sterre of benevolence!
Pitouse princes, and planet merciāble!¹⁷
Appesare of malice and violence!⁶⁸⁹

By vertew pure of your aspectis hable,¹⁸
Unto youre grace lat now ben acceptable
My pure request, that can no forthir gone
To seken help, bot unto yow allone!

'As ye that bene the socoure and suete well
Off remedye, of carefull hertēs cure,
And, in the hugē weltering wawis fell

Off lufis rage, blisfull havin and sure;
O anker and keye of our gude aventure,
Ye have your man with his gude will con-quest;¹⁹⁶⁹⁹

Merci, therefore, and bring his hert to rest!

'Ye know the cause of all my peynēs smert
Bet than my-self, and all myn aventure
Ye may convoye, and as yow list, convert

The hardest hert that formyt hath nature:
Sen in your handis all hale²⁰ lyith my cure,
Have pitee now, O bryght blisfull goddesse,
Off your pure man,²¹ and rew on his dis-tresse!

'And though I was unto your lawis strange,
By ignorance, and nocht by felonye,
And that your grace now likit hath to change⁷¹⁰

My hert, to serven yow perpetualey,
Forgeve all this, and shapith²² remedye
To saven me of your benignē grace,
Or do me sterven²³ furth-with in this place.

¹² more. ¹³ describe. ¹⁴ becoming. ¹⁵ Scarcely. ¹⁶ began. ¹⁷ merciful. ¹⁸ powerful. ¹⁹ conquered. ²⁰ wholly. ²¹ poor servant. ²² prepare. ²³ make me die.

'And with the stremēs of your pereyng lyght
Convoy my hert, that is so wo-begone,
Ageyne unto that suetē hevynly sight,
That I, within the wallis cald as stone,
So suetly saw on morow¹ walk and gone,
Law in the gardyn, ryght tofore myn eye:
Now, merci, Quene! and dome noght todeye.'

This wordis said, my spirit in dispaire, ⁷²²
A quhile I stynt, abiding efter grace:²
And there-with-all hir cristall eyēn faire
Sche kest asyde, and efter that a space,
Benignely sche turnyt has hir face
Towardis me full pleasantly conveide;
And unto me ryght in this wise sche seide:

'Yong man, the cause of all thyne inward
sorowe
Is noght unknowin to my deite, ⁷³⁰
And thy request, bothe now and eke to-
forowe,³
Quhen thou first maid profession to me;
Sen of my grace I have inspirit the
To knawe my lawe, contynew furth, for oft,
There as I mynt⁴ full sore, I smyte bot soft.

'Paciently thou tak thyne aventure,
This will⁵ my sone Cupide, and so will I.
He can the stroke, to me langis⁶ the cure
Quhen I se tyme; and therefor humily
Abyde, and serve, and lat Gude Hope the
gye:⁷ ⁷⁴⁰

Bot, for I have thy forebede here present,
I will the schewe the more of myn entent.

'This is to say, though it to me pertene
In lufis lawe the septrē to governe,
That the effectis of my bemēs schene
Has thaire aspectis by ordynance eterne,
With otheris byndand menēs, to discerne
Quhilum in thingis bothe to cum and gone,
That langis noght to me to writh allone;⁸

'As in thyne awin case now may thou se, ⁷⁵⁰
For-quhy⁹ lo, that [by] otheris influence
Thy persone standis noght in libertee;
Quharefore, though I geve the benevo-
lence,
It standis noght yit in myn advertence,¹⁰

¹ in the morning. ² stopped, waiting to find grace.
³ formerly. ⁴ Where I make show of striking.
⁵ wishes. ⁶ belongs. ⁷ guide thee.
⁸ The effects of my shining beams have, by eternal
ordinance, their influences bound up with others; it is
mine to discern at times things both future and past,
which yet it is not my function to direct alone.
⁹ Because. ¹⁰ control.

Till certeyne coursis endit be and ronne,
Quhill¹¹ of trew servis thow have hir graice
i-wone.

'And yit, considering the nakitnesse
Bothe of thy wit, thy persone, and thy
myght,
It is no mach, of thyne unworthynesse
To hir hie birth, estate, and beautee
bryght:
Als like ye bene as day is to the nyght;
Or sek-cloth is unto fyne cremēsye,¹²
Or doken¹³ to the freschē dayēsye.

'Unlike the mone is to the sonnē schene;
Eke Ianuarye is [un]like to May;
Unlike the cuckow to the phylomene;¹⁴
Thaire tabartis¹⁵ ar noght bothe maid of
array;¹⁶
Unlike the crow is to the papē-iaiy;¹⁷ ⁷⁶⁸
Unlike, in goldsmythis werk, a fischis eye
To preise¹⁸ with perll, or maked be so heyne.

'As I have said, [now] unto me belangith
Specialy the cure of thy seknesse;
Bot now thy matere so in balance hangith,
That it requerith to thy sekernesne¹⁹
The help of othir mo that bene goddes,
And have in thame the menēs and the lore,
In this matere to schorten with thy sore.²⁰

'And for thou sall se wele that I entend
Un-to thy help, thy welefare to preserve,
The streightē weye thy spirit will I send ⁷⁸⁰
To the goddesse that clepit is Mynerve,
And se that thou hir hestis wele con-
serve;²¹
For in this case sche may be thy supplye,²²
And put thy hert in rest, als wele as I.

'Bot, for the way is uncouth²³ unto the,
There as hir duelling is and hir sojurne,
I will that Gude Hope servand to the be,
Youre alleris²⁴ frend, to let the to murn,²⁵
Be thy condyt and gyde till thou returne,
And hir besech that sche will, in thy nede,
Hir counsele geve to thy welefare and
spede; ⁷⁹¹

'And that sche will, as langith hir office,
Be thy gude lady, help and counseiloure,

¹¹ Until. ¹² crimson cloth. ¹³ dock. ¹⁴ nightingale.
¹⁵ coats. ¹⁶ of one pattern. ¹⁷ parrot. ¹⁸ value.
MS. *preresse*. ¹⁹ security. ²⁰ to shorten thy woe with.
²¹ keep her commands well. ²² help. ²³ unknown.
²⁴ Of you all. ²⁵ to prevent thy mourning.

And to the schewe hir rype and gude
avise,

Throw quhich thou may, be processe and
laboure,

Atteyne unto that glad and goldyn floure,
That thou wald have so fayn with all thy
hart.

And forthir-more, sen thou hir servand art,

'Quhen thou descendis down to ground
ageyne,

Say to the men that there bene resident,
How long think thay to stand in my dis-
deyne, 801

That in my lawis bene so negligent

From day to day, and list tham noght
repent,

Bot breken louse, and walken at thaire
large? ¹

Is nocht eft none that thereof gevis
charge? ²

'And for,' quod sche, 'the angir and the
smert

Off thaire unkyndenesse dooth me con-
streyne

My femynyne and wofull tender hert,

That than I wepe; and, to a token pleyne,

As of my teris cummyth all this reyne,

That ye se on the ground so fast ybete 811
Fro day to day, my turment is so grete.

'And quhen I wepe, and stynt anothir
quhile,³

For pacience that is in womanhede,
Than all my wrath and rancoure I exile;

And of my cristall teris that bene schede,

The hony flouris growen up and sprede,
That preyen men, [as] in thaire flouris
wise,⁴

Be trewe of lufe, and worschip my servise.

'And eke, in takin of this pitouse tale, 820

Quhen so my teris dropen on the ground,
In thaire nature the lytill birdis smale

Styntith thair song, and murnyth for
that stound;⁵

And all the lightis in the hevin round

Off my grevance have suich compaciencie,⁶

That from the ground they hidden thaire
presence.

¹ at large.

² Is there not even one that gives heed to this? Per-
haps *eft* (= again) should be *left*.

³ again cease.

⁴ space of time.

⁵ in their flower fashion.

⁶ compassion.

'And yit in tokenyng forthir of this thing,
Quhen flouris springis and freschest bene
of hewe,

And that the birdis on the twistis sing,

At thilk tyme ay gynnen folk renewe

That servis unto love, as ay is dewe, 831

Most⁷ commonly has ay his observance,

And of thaire sleuth tofore⁸ have repent-
ance.

'Thus maist thou seyne, that myn effectis
grete,

Unto the quhich ye aughten maist weye,⁹

No lyte¹⁰ offense, to sleuth is [al] forget¹¹:

And therefore in this wisd to tham seye,

As I the here have bid[den], and con-
veye

The matere all the better tofore¹² said;

Thus sall on the my chargè bene ilaid. 840

'Say on than, "Quhare is becummyne, for
schame!

The songis new, the fresch carolis and
dance,

The lusty lyf, the mony change of game,

The fresche array, the lusty contenance,

The besy awayte,¹³ the hertly observ-
ance,

That quhilum was amongis thame so ryf?"

Bid tham repent in tyme, and mend thare
lyf:

'Or I sall, with my fader old Saturne,

And with al hale¹⁴ oure hevinly alliance,

Oure glad aspectis from thame writh¹⁵ and
turne, 850

That all the world sall waile thaire gov-
ernance.¹⁶

Bid thame betyme that thai have re-
pentance,

And [with] thaire hertis hale renew my
lawe;

And I my hand fro beting sall withdrawe.

'This is to say, contynew in my servise,

Worschip my law, and my name mag-
nifye,

That am your hevin and your paradise;

And I your confort here sall multiplye,

And, for your meryt here, perpetualye

Ressave I sall your saulis, of my grace, 860

To lufe with me as goddis in this place.'

⁷ Supply *who* before *most*. ⁸ former. ⁹ ought
most to pay regard. ¹⁰ little. ¹¹ for sloth is all
forgotten. ¹² before. ¹³ eager service. ¹⁴ all whole.

¹⁵ direct. ¹⁶ bewail their conduct.

With humble thank, and all the reverence
That feble wit and connyng¹ may at-
teyne,

I tuke my leve; and from hir [hy] presence,
Gude Hope and I to-gider, bothë tueyne,
Departit are, and, schortly for to seyne,²
He hath me led [the] redy wayis ryght
Unto Minervis palace, faire and bryght.

Quhare as I fand, full redy at the yate,³
The maister portare, callit Pacience, ⁸⁷⁰
That frely lete us in, unquestionate;

And there we sawe the perfyte excel-
lence,

The said renewe,⁴ the state, the rever-
ence,

The strenth, the beautee, and the ordour
digne⁵

Off hir court riall, noble, and benigne.

And straught unto the presence sodeynly
Off dame Minerve, the pacient goddesse,
Gude Hope my gydë led me redily;

To quhom anon, with dredefull humyl-
nesse,⁶

Off my cummyng the cause I gan ex-
presse, ⁸⁸⁰

And all the processe hole, unto the end,
Off Venus charge, as likit hir to send.

Off quhich ryght thus hir ansuere was in
bref:

'My son, I have wele herd, and under-
stond,

Be thy rerherse, the matere of thy gref,
And thy request to procure, and to
fonde⁷

Off thy pennance⁸ sum confort at my
hond,

Be counsele of thy lady Venus clere,
To be with hir thyne help in this matere.

'Bot in this case thou sall wele knawe and
witt, ⁸⁹⁰

Thou may thy hertë ground on suich a
wise,

That thy labour will be bot lytill quit;⁹
And thou may set it in [an]othir wise,

That wil be to the grete worschip and
prise;

And gif thou durst unto that way enclyne,
I will the geve my lore and disciplyne.

¹ skill. ² shortly to say. ³ gate.

⁴ Unsatisfactorily explained as "grave renewal."

⁵ dignified. ⁶ timorous humility. ⁷ seek.

⁸ suffering. ⁹ requited.

'Lo, my gude sone, this is als mich to seyne,¹⁰
As, gif thy lufe [be] sett all ulyterly

On nycë lust,¹¹ thy travail is in veyne;
And so the end sall turne of thy folye⁹⁰⁰

To payne and repentance; lo, wate thou
quhy?¹²

Gif the ne list thy lufe on¹³ vertew set,
Vertu sall be the cause of thy forfet.¹⁴

'Tak him before in all thy governance,
That in his hand the sterc¹⁵ has of you all;

And pray unto his hyë purveyance¹⁶
Thy lufe to gye, and on him traist and call,

That corner-stone and ground is of the
wall

That failis noght; and trust, withoutin
drede,

Unto thy purpose sone he sall the lede. ⁹¹⁰

'For lo, the werk that first is foundit sure,
May better bere a pace¹⁷ and hyare be

Than othir wise, and langere sall endure
Be monyfald, this may thy resoun see,

And stronger to defend¹⁸ adversitee:
Ground [thou] thy werk, therefore, upon the

stone,

And thy desire sall forthward with the gone.

'Be trewe, and meke, and stedfast in thy
thought,

And diligent hir merci to procure, ⁹¹⁹
Noght onely in thy word; for word is noght,

Bot gif¹⁹ thy werk and all thy besy cure²⁰
Accord thereto, and utrid be mesure²¹

The place, the houre, the maner, and the
wise;

Gif Mercy sall admitten thy servise.

"All thing has tyme," thus sais Ecclesiaste;
And wele is him that his tyme wel abit.²²

Abyde thy time; for he that can bot haste
Can noght of hap,²³ the wisë man it writ;

And oft gude fortune flourith with gude
wit:

Quharefore, gif thou will [ay] be wele for-
tunyt, ⁹³⁰

Lat wisdom ay [un]to thy will be junyt.²⁴

'Bot there be mony of so brukill²⁵ sort,
That feynis treuth in lufë for a quhile,

¹⁰ as much as to say. ¹¹ on foolish desire. ¹² know
thou why. ¹³ MS. on lufe thy. ¹⁴ disaster. ¹⁵ con-
trol. ¹⁶ providence. ¹⁷ step, stage (?). ¹⁸ resist.
¹⁹ Unless. ²⁰ care. ²¹ and let the place, etc., be
stated with moderation. ²² abideth. ²³ Controls not
fortune. ²⁴ joined. ²⁵ brittle, unreliable.

And setten all thaire wittis and disport ¹

The sely innocent woman to begyle,

And so to wynne thaire lustis with a wile;
Suich feynit treuth is all bot trechorye,
Under the umbre ² of hid ypocrisie.

'For as the foulere quibistlith in his throte

Diversely, to counterfete the brid, ⁹⁴⁰

And feynis mony a suete and strang^e note,

That in the busk ³ for his desate ⁴ is hid,

Till sche be fast lokin his net amyd;

Ryght so the fatoure, ⁵ the false theif, I say,

With suete tresoun oft wynnith thus his pray.

'Fy on all suich! fy on thaire doubilnesse!

Fy on thaire lust and bestly appetite!

Thaire wolvis hertis, in lambis liknesse;

Thaire thoughtis blak, hid under wordis
quhite; ⁹⁴⁹

Fy on thaire laboure! fy on thaire delyte!

That feynen outward all to hir honour,

And in thaire hert hir worschip ⁶ wold devoure.

'So hard it is to trusten now on dayes

The world, it is so double and inconstant,

Off quhich the suth is kid be mony assayes; ⁷

More pitee is; for quhich the remanant

That menen wele and ar noght variant

For otheris gilt ar ⁸ suspect of untreuth,
And hyndrit oft, and treuely that is reuth.

'Bot gif the hert be groundit ferm and stable

In Goddis law, thy purpose to attayne,

Thy laboure is to me [ful] agreable; ⁹⁶²

And my full help, with counsele trew and pleyne,

I will the schewe, and this is the certeyne;

Opyn thy hert, therefore, and lat me se

Gif thy remede be pertynent to me.' ⁹

'Madame,' quod I, 'sen it is your plesance

That I declare the kynd of my loving,

Treuely and gude, withoutin variance,

I ¹⁰ lufe that floure abuse all other thing;

And wold bene he that to hir worschip-
ping ⁹⁷¹

Myght ought availe, be Him that starf on
rude, ¹¹

And nouthir spare for travaile, lyf, nor
gude. ¹²

¹ delight. ² shade. ³ bush. ⁴ deceit. ⁵ deceiver.

⁶ honor. ⁷ the truth is shown by many proofs.

⁸ MS. and. ⁹ is my affair. ¹⁰ MS. In. ¹¹ died

on cross. ¹² goods.

'And forthirmore, as touching the nature

Off my lufing, to worschip or to blame,

I darre wele say, and there-in me assure,

For ony gold that ony wight can name

Nald ¹³ I be he that suld of hir gude fame

Be blamischere in ony point or wyse,

For wele nor wo, quhill my lyfe may suffice. ¹⁴

'This is theeffect ¹⁵ trewly of myn entent, ⁹⁸¹

Touching the suete that smertis me so
sore,

Giff this be faynt, ¹⁶ I can it noght repent,

All though my lyf suld forfait be there-
fore.

Blisful princes! I can seye you no more;

Bot so desire my wittis dooth compace, ¹⁷

More joy in erth kepe ¹⁸ I noght bot your
grace.'

'Desire,' quod sche, 'I nyl it noght deny, ¹⁹

So thou it ground and set in Cristin wise;

And therefore, son, opyn thy hert playnly.'

'Madame,' quod I, 'trew withoutin fan-
tise, ²⁰ ⁹⁹¹

That day sall never be I sall up-rise

For my delyte to covate the plesance

That may hir worschip ²¹ putten in balance. ²²

'For ovre all thing, lo, this were my glad-
nesse,

To sene the fresche beautee of hir face;

And gif I myght deserv^e, be processe, ²³

For my grete lufe and treuth, to stond in
grace,

Hir worschip sauf, ²⁴ lo, here the blisfull
cace ²⁵

That I wold ask, and there [un]to at-
tend, ²⁶ ¹⁰⁰⁰

For my most joye unto my lyfis end.'

'Now wele,' quod sche, 'and sen ²⁷ that it
is so,

That in vertew thy lufe is set with treuth,

To helpen the I will be one of tho

From hen^esforth, and hertly without
sleuth,

Off thy distresse and excesse to have
reuth;

That has thy hert, I will [hir] pray full
faire,

That Fortune be no more thereto contraire.

¹³ Would not. MS. Wald. ¹⁴ endure. ¹⁵ gist.

¹⁶ feigned (fault?). ¹⁷ overwhelm. ¹⁸ care for.

¹⁹ say it nay. ²⁰ truly without deceit. ²¹ honour.

²² jeopardy. ²³ in course of time. ²⁴ Her honour

safe. ²⁵ lot. ²⁶ expect, wait for. ²⁷ since.

'For suth it is, that all ye crēaturis
Quich under us beneth have your duel-
lyng,

1010

Ressaven diversely your aventuris,
Off quich the cure and principall melling¹
Apperit is,² withoutin repellyng,³
Onely to hir that has the cuttis⁴ two
In hand,⁵ bothe of your wele and of your wo.

'And how so be [it] that sum clerkis trete,
That all your chancē⁶ causit is tofore
Heigh in the hevin, by quhois effectis grete
Ye movit are to wrething⁷ lesse or more,
Thar⁸ in the world, thus calling that
therefore

1020

"Fortune," and so that the diversitee
Off thaire wirking suld cause necessitee;

'Bot othir clerkis halden that the man
Has in him-self the chose⁹ and libertee
To cause his awin fortune, how or quhan
That him best lest, and no necessitee
Was in the hevin at his nativitee,
Bot yit the thingis happin in commune¹⁰
Efter purpose, so cleping thame "Fortune."

And quhare a persone has tofore knawing¹¹
Off it that is to fall[en] purposely, 1031
Lo, Fortune is bot wayke in suich a thing,
Thou may wele wit, and here ensample
quhy;

To God, that is the first[ē] cause onely
Off every thing, there may no fortune fall:
And quhy? for he foreknawin is¹² of all.

'And therefore thus I say to this sentence;
Fortune is most and strangest¹³ evermore,
Quhare lest¹⁴ foreknawing or intelligence
Is in the man; and, sone, of wit or lore
Sen thou are wayke and feble, lo, there-
fore,

1041

The more thou art in dangere¹⁵ and com-
mune¹⁶

With hir that clerkis clepen so Fortune.

'Bot for the sake, and at the reverence
Off Venus clere, as I the said tofore,
I have of thy distresse compaciencie;¹⁷
And in confort and relesche¹⁸ of thy sore,
The schewit [have] here myn avise there-
fore;

¹ guidance (*lit.* meddling). ² Appertains. ³ recall.
⁴ lots. ⁵ i.e., Fortune. ⁶ fate. ⁷ action. ⁸ MS. *Qu-*
hare. ⁹ choice. ¹⁰ ordinarily. ¹¹ previous knowledge.
¹² previously aware. ¹³ strongest. ¹⁴ least. ¹⁵ in the
power. ¹⁶ allied. ¹⁷ compassion. ¹⁸ assuagement.

Pray Fortune help, for mich unlikely thing
Full oft about sche sodeynly dooth bring.

'Now go thy way, and have gude mynde
upon

1051

Qubat I have said in way of thy doc-
tryne.¹⁹

'I sall, madame,' quod I; and ryht anon
I tuke my leve:—als straught as ony lyne,
With-in a beme, that fro the contree²⁰
dyvine

Sche, Percyng throw the firmament, ex-
tendit,

To ground ageyne my spirit is descendit.

Quhare, in a lusty plane,²¹ tuke I my way,
Endlang²² a ryver, plesant to behold,
Enbroudin²³ all with fresche flouris gay,
Quhare, throu the gravel, bryght as ony
gold,

1061

The cristall water ran so clere and cold,
That, in myn erē maid contynualy
A maner soun, mellit²⁴ with armony;

That full of lytill fischis by the brym,
Now here, now there, with bakkis blew
as lede,

Lap²⁵ and playit, and in a rout can swym
So prattily, and dressit²⁶ tham to sprede
Thaire curall²⁷ fynnis, as the ruby rede,
That in the sonnē on thaire scalis bryght
As gesserant²⁸ ay glitterit in my sight: 1071

And by this ilkē ryver-syde alawe²⁹
Ane hyē way [thar] fand I like to bene,³⁰
On quich, on every syde, a longē rawe
Off treis saw I, full of levis grene,
That full of fruyte delitable were to sene,
And also, as it come unto my mind,
Off bestis sawe I mony diverse kynd:

The lyoun king, and his fere³¹ lyonesse;
The pantere, like unto the smaragdyne;³²
The lytill squerell, full of besynesne; 1081
The slawē ase, the druggare beste of
pyne³³;

The nycē³⁴ ape; the werely porpapyne;³⁵
The Percyng lynx; the lufare unicorne,³⁶
That voidis³⁷ venym with his evoure³⁸ horne.

¹⁹ teaching. ²⁰ Skeat suggests *court*. ²¹ pleasant
plain. ²² Along. ²³ Embroidered. ²⁴ A kind of
sound, mingled. ²⁵ Leapt. ²⁶ addressed. ²⁷ coral.
²⁸ shining mail. ²⁹ down by this same river-side.
³⁰ like as it were. ³¹ companion. ³² emerald. ³³ beast
drugging painfully. ³⁴ foolish. ³⁵ bristling porcupine.
³⁶ The unicorn was supposed to be subdued by virgins.
³⁷ expels. ³⁸ ivory.

There sawe I dresse¹ him new out of [his]
haunt

The fery² tigere, full of felonye;
The dromydare; the standar³ oliphant;

The wyly fox, the wedowis inemye;
The clymbare gayte;⁴ the elk for alblas-
trye;⁵

The herknere bore;⁶ the holsum grey for
hortis;⁷

The haire also, that oft gooth to the wortis.⁸

The bugill,⁹ draware by his hornis grete;
The martrik,¹⁰ sable, foynyee,¹¹ and mony
mo;

The chalk-quhite ermyn, tippit as the jete;
The riall hert, the conyng,¹² and the ro;
The wolf, that of the murthir nocht say-
[is] 'Ho!' ¹³

The lesty¹⁴ bever, and the ravin bare;¹⁵
For chamelot,¹⁶ the camel full of hare;

With mony an othir beste diverse and
strange, ¹¹⁰⁰
That cummyth nocht as now unto my
mynd.

Bot now to purpose, — straucht furth the
range

I held a way, oure-hailing¹⁷ in my mynd
From quhens I come, and quhare that I
suld fynd

Fortune, the goddesse; unto quhom in hye
Gude Hope, my gyde, has led me sodehyly.

And at the last, behalding thus asyde,
A rounde place [y]wallit have I found;
In myddis quhare eftsone¹⁸ I have [a]spide
Fortune, the goddesse, hufing¹⁹ on the
ground : ¹¹¹⁰

And ryght before hir fete, of compas round,
A quhele, on quhich [than] clevering I sye²⁰
A multitude of folk before myn eye.

And ane surcote sche werit long that tyde,
That semyt [un]to me of diverse hewis,
Qubihum²¹ thus, quhen sche wald [hir] turn
asyde,

Stude this goddesse of fortune and [of
glewis²²];

A chapellet, with mony fresche anewis,²³

¹ issue. ² active. ³ standing. ⁴ climbing goat.
⁵ proof against missiles of the cross-bow. ⁶ heark'ning
boar. ⁷ badger, [whose grease is good] for hurta.
⁸ vegetables. ⁹ ox. ¹⁰ marten. ¹¹ beech-marten.
¹² coney. ¹³ never ceases. ¹⁴ skilful. ¹⁵ ravening
bear. ¹⁶ camelot cloth. ¹⁷ revolving. ¹⁸ soon after.
¹⁹ dwelling. ²⁰ clambering I saw. ²¹ At times.
²² sports, freaks. ²³ little rings. Fr. *anneau*.

Sche had upon her hed; and with this hong
A mantill on hir schuldris, large and long,

That furrit was with ermyn full quhite, ¹¹²¹
Degoutit with the self²⁴ in spottis blake:

And quhikum in hir chierē²⁵ thus a lyte²⁶
Louring sche was; and thus sone it wold
slake,

And sodehyly a maner smylyng make,
And²⁷ sche were glad; [for] at one contenance
Sche held nocht, bot [was] ay in variance.

And underneth the quhelē sawe I there
Ane ugly pit, [was] depe as ony belle,
That to behald thereon I quoke for fere;
Bot o thing herd I, that quho there-in
fell ¹¹³¹

Come no more up agane, tidingis to telle;
Off quhich, astonait of that ferefull syght,
I ne wist quhat to done, so was I fricht.²⁸

Bot for to see the sudayn weltering
Off that ilk quhele, that sloppare²⁹ was to
hold,

It semyt unto my wit a strangē thing,
So mony I sawe that than clymben wold,
And failit foting, and to ground were
rold;

And othir eke, that sat above on hye, ¹¹⁴⁰
Were overthrawe in twinklyng of an eye.

And on the quhelē was lytill void space,
Wele nere oure-straught³⁰ fro lawē [un]to
hye;

And they were ware³¹ that longē sat in
place,

So tolter quhikum did sche it to-wrye;³²
There was bot clymbe[n] and ryght down-
ward hye,

And sum were eke that fallen had [so] sore,
There for to clymbe thaire corage was no
more.

I sawe also that, quhere [as] sum were
slungin,

Be quhirlyng of the quhele, unto the
ground, ¹¹⁵⁰

Full sudaynly sche hath [thaim] up
ythrungin,³³

And set thame on agane full sauf and
sound;

And ever I sawe a newē swarm about,
³⁴ self-spotted. ³⁵ cheer, demeanour. ³⁶ a little.
²⁷ If. ²⁸ affrighted. ²⁹ alippery. ³⁰ very nearly
covered. ³¹ wary. ³² So unsteadily at times she
turned it about. ³³ thrust them up.

That [thought] to clymbe upward upon the
quhele,
In stede of thame that myght no langer
rele.¹

And at the last, in presence of thame all
That stude about, sche clepit² me be
name;

And therewith apon knëis gan I fall
Full sodaynly hailisng,³ abaist for schame;
And, smylyng thus, sche said to me in
game,¹¹⁶⁰

'Quhat doest thou here? Quho has the hider
sent?

Say on anon, and tell me thyn entent.

'I se wele, by thy chere and contenance,
There is sum thing that lysis the on hert,
It stant⁴ noght with the as thou wald, per-
chance?'

'Madame,' quod I, 'for lufe is all the
smert

That ever I fele, endlang and over-
thwert.⁵

Help, of your grace, me wofull wrechit
wight,

Sen⁶ me to cure ye powere have and
myght.'

'Quhat help,' quod sche, 'wold thou that I
ordeyne,¹¹⁷⁰

To bring[en] the unto thy hertis desire?'

'Madame,' quod I, 'bot⁷ that your grace
dedeyne,

Off your grete myght, my wittis to en-
spire,

To win⁸ the well that slokin may the fyre
In quhich I birn; a, goddesse fortunate!

Help now my game, that is in point to
mate.⁹

'Off mate?' quod sche, 'O! verray sely¹⁰
wrech,

I se wele by thy dedely coloure pale,
Thou art to feble of thy-self to streche

Upon my quhele, to clymbe[n] or
to hale¹¹¹¹⁸⁰

Withoutin help; for thou has fundin
stale¹²

This now day, withoutin werdis wele,¹³
And wantis now thy veray hertis hele.¹⁴

¹ go round, roll. ² called. ³ saluting. ⁴ stands.
⁵ along and across, through and through me. ⁶ since.
⁷ only. ⁸ reach. ⁹ on point of being checkmated.
¹⁰ helpless. ¹¹ haul. ¹² found stalemate. ¹³ good-
ness of fortune. ¹⁴ health.

'Wele maistow be a wrechit man [y]callit,
That wantis the confort suld thy hert[ë]
glade;

And has all thing within thy hert[ë] stallit¹⁵
That may thy youth oppresen or defade.¹⁶

Though thy begynnyng hath bene retro-
grade,

Be froward opposyt quhare till aspert,¹⁷
Now saill thai turn, and luke[n] on the
dert.'¹⁸¹¹⁹⁰

And therewith-all unto the quhele in hye
Sche hath me led, and bad me lere¹⁹ to
clymbe,

Upon the quhich I steppit sudaynly.
'Now hald thy grippis,' quod sche, 'for
thy tyme;

Ane houre and more it rynniss over prime;
To count the hole, the half is nere away;
Spend wele, therefore, the remanant of the
day.

'Ensampl,' quod sche, 'tak of this tofore,²⁰
That fro my quhele be rollit as a ball;

For the nature of it is evermore,¹²⁰⁰
After ane hicht, to vale²¹ and geve a fall,

Thus, quhen me likith, up or doune to
fall.

Fare wele,' quod sche, and by the ere me
toke

So earnestly, that therewithall I woke.

O besy gostel²² ay flikering to and fro,
That never art in quiet nor in rest,
Till thou cum to that place that thou cam
fro,

Quhich is thy first and verray proper
nest:

From day to day so sore here artow
drest,²³

That with thy flesche ay walking²⁴ art in
trouble,¹²¹⁰

And sleping eke; of pyne so has thou double.

Towart²⁵ my-self all this mene I to loke.

Though that my spirit vexit was tofore,
In suer[en]yng,²⁶ allsone as ever I woke,

By twenty fold it was in trouble more,
Bethinking me with sighing hert and sore,

That [I] nan othir thingis bot dremës had,
Nor sekernes,²⁷ my spirit with to glad.

¹⁵ installed. ¹⁶ dispirit. ¹⁷ opposed by perverse
men expert in this. ¹⁸ dirt. ¹⁹ learn. ²⁰ these
folk before (thee). ²¹ descend. ²² restless spirit.
²³ art thou treated. ²⁴ always while waking. ²⁵ MS.
Courret. ²⁶ dreaming. ²⁷ certainty.

And therewith sone I dressit¹ me to ryse,
Fulfid of thocht,² pyne, and adversitee;
And to my-self I said upon this wise;¹²²¹

'Al merci, Lord! quhat will ye do with me?

Quhat lyf is this? Quhare hath my spirit be?

Is this of my forethocht impressioun,
Or is it from the hevin a visioun?

'And gif ye goddis, of youre purviance,
Have schewit this for my reconforting,
In relesche³ of my furiose peunance,
I yow beseke full humily of this thing,
That of youre grace I myght have more takenyng,⁴

1230

Gif it sal be as in my slepe before
Yo shewit have': and forth, withoutin more,

In hye unto the wyndow gan I walk,
Moving within my spirit of this sight,
Quhare sodeynly a turture,⁵ quhite as calk,⁶

So evinly upon my hand gan lyght,
And unto me sche turnyt hir full ryght,
Off quham the chere in hir birdis apert⁷
Gave me in hert[ë] kalendis⁸ of confort.

This fair[ë] bird ryght in hir bill gan hold
Of red jorofflis⁹ with thair stalkis grene
A fair[ë] branche, quhare writtin was with gold,¹²⁴²

On every list,¹⁰ with branchis¹¹ bryght and schene

In compas fair, full plesandly to sene,
A plane sentence, quhich, as I can devise
And have in mynd, said ryght [up]on this wise.

'Awake! awake! I bring, lufar, I bring
The newis glad, that blisfull ben and sure
Of thy confort; now lauch, and play, and syng,

That art besid so glad an aventure;¹²⁵⁰
For in the hevyn decretit is the cure.¹²

And unto me the flouris fair present:¹³
With wyngis spred, hir wayis furth sche went.

Quhilk up a-none I tuke, and as I gesse,
Ane hundreth tymes, or¹⁴ I forthir went,

¹ addressed. ² anxiety. ³ lightening. ⁴ token.
⁵ turtle-dove. ⁶ chalk. ⁷ demeanor. ⁸ beginnings.
⁹ gillyflowers. ¹⁰ edge. ¹¹ flourishes. ¹² cure is decreed thee. ¹³ she presented. ¹⁴ ere.

I have it red, with hert[ë]full glaidnese;
And, half with hope, and half with dred,
it hent,¹⁵

And at my beddis hed, with gud entent,
I have it fairë pynnit up, and this¹²⁵⁹
First takyn was of all my help and blisse.

The quhichë treuly efter, day be day,
That all my wittis maistrit had tofore,
From henn[ë]sferth the paynis did away.

And schortly, so wele Fortune has hir bore,

To quikin treuly day by day my lore,¹⁶
To my larges that¹⁷ I am eumin agayn,
To blisse with hir that is my sovraane.

Bot for als moche as sum micht think or seyne,

Quhat nedis me, apoun so litill evyn,¹⁸
To writt all this? I ansuere thus ageyne,
'Quho that from hell war croppin onys in hevin,¹²⁷¹

Wald, efter o²⁰ thank, for ioy mak sex or sevin:

And every wicht his awin suete²¹ or sore
Has maist in mynde': I can say you no more.

Eke quho may in this lyfe have more plesance

Than cum to largesse from thraldom and peyne,

And by the mene²² of Luffis ordinance,
That has so mony in his goldin cheyne?
Quhich th[ink]is to wyn his hertis sov- ereyne,

Quho suld me wite²³ to write thar-of, lat se!

1280

Now sufficiante is my felicittee.

Beseching unto fair Venus abuse,

For all my brethir that bene in this place,
This is to seyne, that servandis ar to Lufe,
And of his lady can no thank purchase,
His paine relesch,²⁴ and sone to stand in grace,

Boith to his worschip²⁵ and to his first ese;
So that it hir and resoun nocht displese:

And eke for tham that ar noght entrit inne
The dance of lufe, bot thidder-wart on way,

1290

¹⁵ took. ¹⁶ learning. ¹⁷ That to my freedom.
¹⁸ upon so small a foundation. ¹⁹ had once crept into heaven. ²⁰ one. ²¹ sweet, happiness. ²² means.
²³ blame. ²⁴ relieve. ²⁵ honour.

In gudē tyme and sely¹ to begynne
 Their prentisshed, and forthir-more I
 pray
 For thame that passit ben the mony a-
 fray²
 In lufe, and cummyn arn to full plesance,
 To graunt tham all, lo! gude perseverance:

And eke I pray for all the hertis dull,
 That lyven here in sleuth and ignorance,
 And has no curage at the rose³ to pull,
 Thair lif to mend and thair saulis avance
 With [hir]⁴ suete lore, and bring tham
 to gude chance; 1300
 And quho that will noght for this prayer
 turn,
 Quhen thai wald faynest speid, that thai
 may spurn.⁵

To rekynd of every thing the circumstance,
 As hapnit me quhen lessen gan my sore
 Of my rancoure and [al my] wofull chance,
 It war to long; I lat it be tharefor.
 And thus this floure, I can seye [you] no
 more,
 So hertly has unto my help attendit,
 That from the deth hir man sche has de-
 fendit.

And eke the goddis mercifull wirking,⁶
 For my long pane and trewe service in
 lufe, 1311
 That has me gevin halely myn asking,
 Quhich has my hert for evir sett abufe
 In perfyte joy, that nevir may remufe,
 Bot onely deth: of quhom, in laud and
 prise,⁷
 With thankfull hert I say richt in this
 wise:—

‘Blissit mot⁸ be the [heyē] goddis all,
 So fair that glitteren in the firmament!
 And blissit be thare myght celestiall, 1319
 That have convoyit hale, with one assent,
 My lufe, and to [so] glade a consequent!
 And thankit be Fortunys exiltree
 And quhele, that thus so wele has quhirлит
 me!

‘Thankit mot be, and fair and lufe befall
 The nychtingale, that, with so gud ent-
 tent,

Sang thare of lufe the notis suete and small,
 Quhair my fair hertis lady was present,
 Hir with to glad, or⁹ that sche forthir
 went!

And thou gerafloure,¹⁰ mot i-thankit be
 All othir flouris for the lufe of the! 1330

‘And thankit be the fairē castell-wall,
 Quhare as I quhilom lukit furth and lent!
 Thankit mot be the sanctis marciall,¹¹
 That me first causit bath this accident.
 Thankit mot be the grenē bewis¹² bent,
 Throu quhom, and under, first fortunyt me¹³
 My hertis hele,¹⁴ and my confort to se! ’¹⁵

For to the presence suete and delitable,
 Rycht of this floure that full is of ples-
 ance,
 By processe and by menys favorable, 1340
 First of the blisful goddis purveyance,
 And syne¹⁶ throu long and trew contyn-
 ance
 Of veray faith in lufe and trew service,
 I cum am, and [yit] forthir in this wise.

Unworthy, lo, bot onely of hir grace,
 In lufis yok, that esy is and sure,
 In guerdoun [eke] of all my lufis space,¹⁷
 Sche hath me tak, hir humble créature.
 And thus befell my blisfull aventure, 1349
 In youth of lufe, that now, from day to day
 Flourith ay newe; and yit forthir, I say:—

Go litill tretise, nakit of eloquence,
 Causing simplese and povertie to wit;¹⁸
 And pray the rede to have pacience
 Of thy defaute, and to supporten it,¹⁹
 Of his gudnese thy brukilnese to knytt,²⁰
 And his tong for to reule[n] and to stere,
 That thy defautis helit may ben here.

Allace! and gif thou cummyst in presence,
 Quhare-as of blame faynest thou wald be
 quite,²¹ 1360

To here thy rude and crukit eloquens,
 Quho sal be thare to pray for thy remyt?²²
 No wicht, bot geve²³ hir merci will ad-
 mytt

The for gud will, that is thy gyd and stere,²⁴
 To quham for me thou piteously requere.²⁵

⁹ ere. ¹⁰ gillyflower. ¹¹ saints of March.
¹² boughs. ¹³ happened to me. ¹⁴ healing. ¹⁵ MS. be.
¹⁶ afterwards. ¹⁷ duration. ¹⁸ to be known. ¹⁹ to
 bear with it. ²⁰ thy brokenness to piece together.
²¹ free. ²² excuse. ²³ No person, unless. ²⁴ pilot.
²⁵ do thou piteously entreat.

¹ happy. ² struggles. ³ The symbol of the
 object of love in the *Roman de la Rose*. ⁴ Venus's.
 MS. thair. ⁵ I pray that they may trip. ⁶ working.
⁷ praise. ⁸ may.

And thus endith the fattall influence,
 Causit from hevyn, quhare power is com-
 mytt

Of govinnace, by the magnificence
 Of Him that hiest in the hevyn sitt;¹
 To quham we thank that all oure [lif]
 hath writt,¹³⁷⁰

Quho couth it red, agone syne mony a
 yere,

Hich in the hevynnis figure circulere.

Vnto [the] impnis² of my maisteris dere,
 Gowere and Chaucere, that on the step-
 pis satt

Of rethorike, quhill thai were lyvand
 here,

Superlative as poetis laureate,
 In moralitee and eloquence ornate,
 I recommend my buk in lynis sevin,
 And eke thair saulis un-to the blisse of hevyn.

Amen.

*Quod explicit Jacobus Primus,
 Scotorum Rex Illustrissimus.*

GOOD COUNSEL³

SEN⁴ throu vertew encreassis dignite,
 And vertew flour and rut is of noblay,⁵
 Of only weill or quhat estat thou be,

¹ sitteth.

² hymns.

³ This is Skeat's restoration of the text of a ballad found in the Bannatyne M.S., in M.S. Kk. 1. 5, in Cambridge University Library, and in *The Gude and Godlie Ballates*, 1578, in which last it is ascribed to King James I.

⁴ Since.

⁵ nobility.

His steppis sew,⁶ and dreid thee non
 effray:⁷

Exil al vice, and follow trewth alway:
 Luf maist thy God, that first thy luf be-
 gan,⁸

And for ilk⁹ inch he wil thee quyt¹⁰ a
 span.

Be not our¹¹ proud in thy prosperite,
 For as it cumis, sa wil it pas away;
 Thy tym to compt¹² is schort, thou may
 weill se,¹⁰

For of green gres sonn cumis walowit
 hay.

Labour in trewth, quhill licht is of the
 day.

Trust maist in God, for he best gyd thee
 can,

And for ilk inch he wil thee quyt a span.

Sen word is thrall, and thoct is only
 free,

Thou dant¹³ thy tung, that power hes and
 may;

Thou steik¹⁴ thyn een fra warldis vanite;
 Refrein thy lust, and harkin quhat I say;
 Graip or¹⁵ thou slyd, and creip furth on
 the way;

Keip thy behest unto thy God and man,²⁰
 And for ilk inch he wil thee quyt a
 span.

⁶ follow.

⁷ no terror for thyself.

⁸ began by loving thee. ⁹ every. ¹⁰ requite.

¹¹ over.

¹² when counted.

¹³ tame.

¹⁴ close.

¹⁵ grope ere.

ROBERT HENRYSON

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID

ANE doolie ¹ sessoun to ane cairfull dyte
Suld correspond, and be equivalent.

Richt sa it wes quhen I began to wryte

This tragedie; the wedder richt fervent,²

Quhen Aries, in middis of the Lent,
Schouris of haill can fra the north discend,
That scantlie fra the cauld I micht defend.

Yit, nevertheles, within myne oratur³

I stude, quhen Titan had his bemis bricht
Withdrawin doun, and sylit under cure,⁴ ¹⁰

And fair Venus, the bewtie of the nicht,

Uprais, and set unto the west full richt
Hir golden face, in oppositioun
Of god Phebus, direct descending doun.

Throw out the glas hir bemis brast⁵ sa fair

That I micht se on everie syde me by

The northin wind had purifyt the air,

And sched the mistie cloudis fra the sky;

The froist freisit, the blastis bitterly
Fra Pole Artick come quhisling loud and
schill,⁶ ²⁰

And causit me remufe aganis my will.

For I traistit that Venus, luifis quene,

To quhome sum tyme I hecht⁷ obedience,

My faidit hart of lufe scho wald mak grene;

And therupon, with humbill reverence,

I thoct to pray hir hie magnificence;

Bot for greit cauld as than I lattit⁸ was,

And in my chalmer to the fyre can pas.

Thocht lufe be hait,⁹ yit in ane man of age

It kendillis nocht sa sone as in youtheid,

Of quhome the blude is flowing in ane

rage,

And in the auld the curage doif¹⁰ and

deid;

Of quhilk the fire outward is best remeid:

To help be phisike quhair that nature faillit

I am expert — for baith I have assailit.¹¹

I mend the fyre, and beikit¹² me about,

Than tuik ane drink myspreitis to comfort,

And armit me weill fra the cauld thairout:

To cut the winter nicht, and mak it schort,

I tuik ane quair,¹³ and left all uther

sport,

⁴⁰

Writtin be worthie Chaucer glorious,

Of fair Creisseid and worthie Troylus.

And thair I fand, efter that Diomeid

Ressavit had that lady bricht of hew,

How Troilus neir out of wit abraid,¹⁴

And weipit soir, with visage pail of hew;

For quhilk wanhope¹⁵ his teiris can renew,

Quhill¹⁶ Esperus¹⁷ rejoisit him agane:

Thus quhyle¹⁸ in joy he levit, quhile¹⁸ in
pane.

Of hir behest he had greit comforting, ⁵⁰

Traisting to Troy that scho suld mak
retour,

Quhilk be desyrit maist of eirdly thing,

For quhy¹⁹ scho was his only paramour;

Bot quhen he saw passit baith day and hour

Of hir ganecome,²⁰ than sorrow can oppres

His wofull hart in cair and hevines.

Of his distres me neidis nocht reheirs,

For worthie Chauceir, in the samin buik,

In gudelie termis, and in joly veirs,

Compylit hes his cairis, quha will luik. ⁶⁰

To brek my sleip ane uther quair I tuik,

In quhilk I fand the fatall destenie

Of fair Cresseid, that endit wretchitlie.

Quha wait²¹ gif all that Chauceir wrait was
trew?

Nor I wait nocht gif this narratioun

Be authoerist, or fenyeit of the new²²

Be sum poeit, throw his inventioun

Maid to report the lamentatioun

And wofull end of this lustie Creisseid;

And quhat distres scho thoillit,²³ and quhat

deid.²⁴

⁷⁰

¹² basked. ¹³ quire, book. ¹⁴ started. ¹⁵ despair.

¹⁶ Till. ¹⁷ Esperance, hope. ¹⁸ sometimes — some-

times. ¹⁹ because. ²⁰ again-coming. ²¹ knows.

²² newly feigned. ²³ suffered. ²⁴ death.

¹ doleful. ² severe. ³ oratory. ⁴ concealed
under cover. ⁵ burst. ⁶ shrill. ⁷ formerly I prom-
ised. ⁸ prevented. ⁹ hot. ¹⁰ dull (deaf). ¹¹ tried.

Quhen Diomed had all his appetyte,
 And mair, fulfillit of this fair ladie,
 Upon ane uther he set his hail delyte,
 And send to hir ane lybell of repudie;
 And hir excludit fra his companie.
 Than desolait scho walkit up and doun,
 And, sum men sayis, into the court commoun.

O, fair Cresseid! the floure and *A per se*
 Of Troy and Grece, how was thow fortunait!¹

To change in filth all thy feminitie, ⁸⁰
 And be with fleschelic lust sa maculait,²
 And go among the Greikis air³ and lait,
 So gigitlike,⁴ takand thy foull plesance!
 I have pietie thow suld fall sic mischance.

Yit, nevertheles, quhat ever men deme or say
 In scornfull langage of thy brukkilnes,⁵
 I sall excuse, als far furth as I may,
 Thy womanheid, thy wisdome, and fairnes:
 The quhi[l]k Fortoun hes put to sic distres
 As hir pleisit, and nathing throw the gilt ⁹⁰
 Of the, throw wickit langage to be spilt.

This fair lady, in this wyse destitute
 Of all comfort and consolatioun,
 Richt priverlie, but⁶ fellowship, on fute
 Disagysit passit far out of the toun
 Ane myle or twa, unto ane mansioun,
 Beildit⁷ full gay, quhair hir father Calchas
 Quhillk than amang the Greikis dwelland
 was.

Quhen he hir saw, the caus he can inquyre
 Of hir cumming. Scho said, siching full
 soir, ¹⁰⁰

'Fra⁸ Diomeid had gottin his desyre
 He wox werie, and wald of me no moir.'
 Quod Calchas, 'Douchter, weip thow not
 thairfoir,

Peraventure all cummis for the best:
 Welcum to me, thow art full deir ane gest.'

This auld Calchas, efter the law was tho,
 Wes keiper of the tempill, as ane preist,
 In quhilk Venus and hir sone Cupido
 War honourit, and his chalmer was
 thame neist,
 To quhilk Cresseid with baill aneuch⁹ in
 breist ¹¹⁰

Usit to pas, hir prayeris for to say;
 Quhill at the last, upon ane solempne day,

As custome was, the pepill far and neir,
 Befoir the none, unto the tempill went
 With sacrifice, devoit¹⁰ in thair maner.
 But still Cresseid, hevie in hir intent,
 In-to the kirk wald not hir self present,
 For giving of¹¹ the pepill ony deming
 Of hir expuls fra Diomeid the king;

Bot past into ane secreit orature, ¹²⁰
 Quhair scho nicht weip hir wofull desteny.
 Behind hir bak scho cloisit fast the dure,
 And on hir kneis bair fell doun in hy;¹²
 Upon Venus and Cupide angerly
 Scho cryit out, and said on this same wyse,
 'Allace! that ever I maid yow sacrifice!

'Ye gave me anis ane devine responsaill¹³
 That I suld be the flour of luif in Troy,
 Now am I maid an unworthie outwaill,¹⁴
 And all in cair translatit is my joy. ¹³⁰
 Quha sall me gyde? Quha sall me now
 convoy,

Sen I fra Diomeid, and nobill Troylus,
 Am clene excludit, as abject odious?

'O fals Cupide, is nane to wyte¹⁵ bot thow,
 And thymother, of lufe the blind goddess!
 Ye causit me alwayis understand and trow
 The seid of lufe was sawin in my face,
 And ay grew grene throw your supplie¹⁶
 and grace.

Bot now, allace, that seid with froist is
 slane,
 And I fra luifferis left, and all forlane.'¹⁷ ¹⁴⁰

Quhen this was said, doun in ane extasie,
 Ravischit in spreit, intill ane dreame scho
 fell,

And be apperance hard,¹⁸ quhair scho did ly,
 Cupide the king ringand ane silver bell,
 Quhilk men nicht heir fra hevin unto
 hell;

At quhais sound befor Cupide appeiris
 The sevin Planetis, descending fra thair
 spheiris,

Quhilk hes power of all thing generabill¹⁹
 To reull and steir be thair greit influ-
 ence,

¹ fortun'd, ordained. ² stained. ³ early. ⁴ like
⁵ silly girl. ⁶ frailty. ⁷ without. ⁸ Decorated.
⁹ After. ¹⁰ enough.

¹⁰ devout. ¹¹ Lest she should give. ¹² haste.
¹³ answer (to prayer). ¹⁴ outcast. ¹⁵ blame. ¹⁶ sup-
 port. ¹⁷ out of fashion. ¹⁸ heard. ¹⁹ that can
 be generated.

Wedder and wind, and coursis variabill. ¹⁵⁰
And first of all, Saturne gave his sen-
tence,

Quhilk gave to Cupide litill reverence,
Bot, as ane busteous ¹ churle on his maneir,
Come crabitie, with auster luik and cheir.

His face frosnit, ² his lyre ³ was lyke the
leid,

His teith chatterit and cheverit ⁴ with
the chin,

His ene drowpit, how ⁵ sonkin in his heid,
Out of his nois the meldrop ⁶ fast can rin,
With lippis bla, ⁷ and cheikis leine and
thin,

The ice-schoklis that fra his hair down hang
Was wonder greit, and as ane speir als
lang. ¹⁶¹

Atour ⁸ his belt his lyart ⁹ lokkis lay
Felterit ¹⁰ unfair, ouirfret with froistis
hoir;

His garmound and his gyis ¹¹ full gay of
gray;

His widderit weid ¹² fra him the wind out
woir. ¹³

Ane busteous bow within his hand he
boir;

Under his girdill ane flasche of felloun
flanis, ¹⁴

Fedderit with ice, and heidit with hailstanis.

Than Juppiter richt fair and amiabill,
God of the starnis in the firmament, ¹⁷⁰

And nureis to all thing generabill,
Fra his father Saturne far different,
With burelie ¹⁵ face, and browis bricht
and brent, ¹⁶

Upon his heid ane garland, wonder gay,
Of flouris fair, as it had bene in May.

His voice was cleir, as cristall wer his ene,
As goldin wyre sa glitterand was his
hair,

His garmound and his gyis full [gay] of
grene,

With golden listis ¹⁷ gilt on everie gair; ¹⁸
Ane burelie brand about his middill bair;
In his right hand he had ane groundin ¹⁹
speir, ¹⁸¹

Of his father the wraith fra us to weir. ²⁰

Nixt efter him come Mars, the god of ire,
Of strife, debait, and all dissensioun,
To chide and fecht, als feirs as ony fyre;
In hard harnes, hewmound, ²¹ and habir-
geoun;

And on his hanche ane roustie fell fach-
ioun,

And in his hand he had ane roustie sword;
Wrything his face with mony angrie word.

Schaikand his sword, befor Cupide he
come

With reid visage and grislie glowrand
ene;

And at his mouth ane bullar ²² stude of
fome,

Lyke to ane bair ²³ quhetting his tuskis
kene,

Richt tuiyeour lyke, but temperance in
tene; ²⁴

Ane horne he blew with mony bosteous
brag,

Quhilk all this world with weir ²⁵ hes maid
to wag.

Than fair Phebus, lanterne and lamp of
licht

Of man and beist, baith frute and flour-
isching,

Tender nureis, and banischer of nicht,
And of the world causing be his moving

And influence lyfe in all eirdlie thing, ²⁰¹
Without comfort of quhome, of force to
nocht

Must all ga die that in this world is
wrocht.

As king royall he raid upon his chair,
The quhilk Phaeton gydit sum-tyme un-
richt,

The brichtness of his face, quhen it was
bair,

Nane micht behald for peirsing of his
sicht:

This goldin cart with fyrie bemes bricht
Four yokkit steidis full different of hew,
But bait ²⁶ or tying, throw the speir-
is drew. ²¹⁰

The first was soyr, ²⁷ with mane als reid as
rois,

Callit Eoye ²⁸ into the Orient;

¹ blustering. ² wrinkled. ³ complexion. ⁴ shiv-
ered. ⁵ hollow. ⁶ mucus. ⁷ livid. ⁸ Over.
⁹ hoary. ¹⁰ matted. ¹¹ mantle. ¹² withered weeds.
¹³ wafted away. ¹⁴ a sheaf of cruel arrows. ¹⁵ goodly.
¹⁶ smooth. ¹⁷ edges. ¹⁸ gore. ¹⁹ sharpened. ²⁰ ward.

²¹ helmet. ²² bubble-mass. ²³ boar. ²⁴ quarrel-
some, without temperance in anger. ²⁵ war. ²⁶ With-
out pause. ²⁷ sorrel. ²⁸ Eöus, belonging to the dawn.

The secund steid to name hecht Ethios,
 Quhitlie and pail, and sum deill ascend-
 ent;

The thrid Peros, right hait and richt fer-
 vent;

The feird was blak, [and] callit Phlegonie,
 Quhilk rollis Phebus down into the sey.

Venus was thair present, that goddess [gay],
 Her sonnys querrel for to defend, and
 mak

Hir awin complaint, cled in ane nyce
 array, ²²⁰

The ane half grene, the uther half sabill
 blak,

Quhyte hair as gold, kemmit and sched
 abak,

Bot in hir face semit greit variance,
 Quhyles perfyte treuth, and quhyles incon-
 stance.

Under smyling scho was dissimulait,
 Provocative with blenkis¹ amorous,
 And suddanelly changit and alterait,
 Angrie as ony serpent vennemous,
 Richt pungitive with wordis odious: ²²⁹

Thus variant scho was, quha list tak keip,²
 With ane eye lauch,³ and with the uther
 weip.

In taikning⁴ that all fleschelic paramour
 Quhilk Venus hes in reull and govern-
 ance,

Is sum tyme sweet, sum tyme bitter and
 sour,

Richt unstabill, and full of variance,
 Mingit⁵ with cairfull joy and fals ples-
 ance,

Now hait, now cauld, now blyith, now full
 of wo,

Now grene as leif, now widderit and ago.

With buik in hand than come Mercurius,
 Richt eloquent and full of rethorie, ²⁴⁰

With polite termis and delicious,
 With pen and ink to report all reddie,
 Setting sangis⁶ and singand merilie.

His hude was reid, heklit atouir⁷ his croun,
 Lyke to ane poeit of the auld fassoun.⁸

Boxis he bair with fine electuairis,
 And sugerit syropis for digestioun,

Spycis belangand to the pothecairis,
 With mony hailsum sweet confection,
 Doctour in phisick, cled in ane skarlot
 gown,

And furrit weill, as sic ane aucht to be, ²⁵¹
 Honest and gude, and not ane word culd lie.

Nixt efter him come Lady Cynthia,
 The last of all, and swiftest in hir spheir,
 Of colour blak, buskit⁹ with hornis twa,
 And in the night scho listis best appeir;
 Haw¹⁰ as the leid, of colour nathing cleir;
 For all hir licht scho borrowis at hir brother
 Titan, for of himself scho hes naue uther.

Hir gyse was gray, and full of spottis blak;
 And on hir breist ane churle paintit full
 evin, ²⁶¹

Beirand ane bunche of thornis on his bak,
 Quhilk for his thift micht clim na nar¹¹
 the hevin.

Thus quhen thay gadderit war thir God-
 dis sevin,

Mercurius they cheisit with ane assent
 To be foirspeikar in the parliament.

Quha had bene thair, and liken for to heir
 His facound¹² toung and termis exquisite,
 Of rhetorick the prettick¹³ he micht leir,¹⁴
 In breif sermone ane pregnant sentence
 wryte: ²⁷⁰

Befoir Cupide veiling his cap alyte,¹⁵
 Speiris the caus of that vocation;
 And he anone schew¹⁶ his intentioun.

'Lo,' (quod Cupide) 'quha will blaspheme
 the name

Of his awin god, outhir in word or deid,
 To all goddis he dois baith lak¹⁷ and schame,

And suld have bitter panis to his meid;
 I say this by yone wretchit Cresseid,
 The quhilk throw me was sum tyme flour
 of lufe,

Me and my mother starklie can reprufe; ²⁸⁰

'Saying of hir greit infelicitie

I was the caus and my mother Venus;
 Ane blind Goddes hir cald, that micht not se,

With selander and defame injurious:
 Thus hir leving unclene and lecherous
 Scho wald returne on me and [on] my
 mother,

To quhome I schew my grace abone all uther.

⁹ decked. ¹⁰ Wan, livid. ¹¹ nearer. ¹² eloquent.
¹³ practice. ¹⁴ learn. ¹⁵ a little. ¹⁶ shewed. ¹⁷ reproach.

¹ glances. ² heed. ³ laughed. ⁴ tokening.
⁵ Mingled. ⁶ songs (to music). ⁷ fringed about.
⁸ fashion (cf. Chaucer's portrait).

'And sen ¹ ye ar all sevin deificait,
 Participant of devyne sapience,
 This greit injure done to our hie estait, ²⁹⁰
 Me-think with pane we suld mak recom-
 pence;
 Was never to goddes done sic violence.
 As weill for yow as for myself I say,
 Thairfor ga help to revenge I yow pray.'

Mercurius to Cupide gave answeir,
 And said, 'Schir King, my counsall is
 that ye
 Refer yow to the hiest planeit heir,
 And tak to him the lawest of degre,
 The pane of Cresseid for to modifie: ²
 As God Saturne, with him tak Cynthia.' ³⁰⁰
 'I am content,' (quod he), 'to tak thay twa.'

Than thus proceedit Saturne and the Mone,
 Quhen thay the mater rypelie had degest,
 For the dispyte to Cupide scho had done,
 And to Venus oppin and manifest,
 In all hir lyfe with pane to be opprest,
 And torment sair, with seiknes incurabill,
 And to all lovers be abhominabill.

This dulefull sentence Saturne tuik on hand,
 And passit down quhair cairfull Cresseid
 lay, ³¹⁰
 And on hir heid he laid ane frostie wand;
 Than lawfullie ³ on this wyse can he say:
 'Thy greit fairnes, and all thy bewtie gay,
 Thy wantoun blude, and eik thy goldin hair,
 Heir I exclude fra the for evermair.

'I change thy mirth into melancholy,
 Quhilk is the mother of all pensivenes;
 Thy moisture and thy heit in cald and dry;
 Thyne insolence, thy play and wantones
 To greit diseis; thy pomp and thy riches
 In mortall neid; and greit penuritie ³²¹
 Thow suffer sall; and as ane beggar die.'

O cruell Saturne! fraward and angrie,
 Hard is thy dome, and too malicious:
 On fair Cresseid quhy hes thow na mercie,
 Quhilk was sa sweit, gentill, and amour-
 ous?

Withdraw thy sentence, and be gracious
 As thow was never; so schawis thow thy
 deid,
 Ane wraikfull ⁴ sentence gevin on fair Cres-
 seid.

Than Cynthia, quhen Saturne past away, ³³⁰
 Out of hir sait descendit down belyve, ⁶
 And red ane bill on Cresseid quhair scho
 lay,

Contening this sentence diffinityve:
 'Fra heit ⁶ of bodie I the now deprive,
 And to thy seiknes sal be na recure,
 But in dolour thy dayis to indure.

'Thy cristall ene minglit with blude I mak;
 Thy voice sa cleir, unplesand, hoir, and
 hace; ⁷
 Thy lustie lyre ⁸ ouirspreid with spottis blak,
 And lumpis haw ⁹ appeirand in thy face;
 Quhair thow cummis, ilk man sall fle the
 place; ³⁴¹
 This sall thow go begging fra hous to hous,
 With cop and clapper lyke ane Lazarous.' ¹⁰

This doolie dreame, this uglye visioun
 Brocht to ane end, Cresseid fra it awoik,
 And all that court and convocation
 Vanischit away. Than rais scho up and
 tuik
 Ane poleist glas, and hir schaddow culd
 luik;
 And quhen scho saw hir face sa deformait,
 Gif scho in hart was wa aneuch, God
 wait! ¹¹ ³⁵⁰

Weiping full sair, 'Lo, quhat it is,' (quod
 sche)
 'With fraward langage for to mufe and
 steir
 Our craibit goddis, and sa is sene on me!
 My blaspheming now have I bocht full
 deir;
 All eirdly joy and mirth I set areir. ¹²
 Allace, this day! allace, this wofull tyde!
 Quhen I began with my goddis for to chydle!'

Be this was said, ane chyld come fra the
 hall,
 To warne Cresseid the supper was reddy;
 First knockit at the dure, and syne ¹³ culd
 call, ³⁶⁰
 'Madame, your father biddis you cum
 in hy, ¹⁴
 He has mervell sa lang on grouf ¹⁵ ye ly,
 And sayis, your prayers bene too lang sum
 deill,
 The goddis wait all your intent full weill.'

¹ since. ² determine. ³ in accordance with the
 decision of the court. ⁴ revengeful.

⁵ quickly. ⁶ heat. ⁷ hoar (old), and hoarse.
⁸ skin. ⁹ livid. ¹⁰ leper. ¹¹ knows. ¹² behind.
¹³ afterwards. ¹⁴ haste. ¹⁵ grovelling.

Quod scho, 'Fair chylde, ga to my father
deir

And pray him cum to speik with me
anone.'

And sa he did, and said, 'Douchter, quhat
cheir?'

'Allace' (quod scho), 'father, my mirth
is gone.'

'How sa?' (quod he) and scho can all
expone,¹

As I have tauld, the vengeance and the
wraik,²

For hir trespas, Cupide on hir culd tak. ³⁷⁰

He luikit on hir uglye lipper ³ face,
The quhilk befor was quhite as lillie
flour;

Wringand his handis, oftymes he said,
allace,

That he had levit to se that wofull hour;
For he knew weill that thair was na suc-
cour

To hir seiknes, and that dowblit his pane;
Thus was thair cair aneuch betuix thame
twane.

Quhen thay togidder murnit had full lang,
Quod Cresseid, 'Father, I wald not be
kend; ⁴ ³⁸⁰

Thairfoir in secreit wyse ye let me gang
Unto yone hospitall at the tounis end;
And thidder sum meit for cheritie me
send,

To leif upon; for all mirth in this eird ⁵
Is fra me gane, sic is my wickit weird. ⁶

Than in ane mantill and ane bavar ⁷ hat,
With cop and clapper, wonder prively
He opnit ane secreit yett, ⁸ and out thair at
Convoyit hir, that na man suld espy,
Unto ane village half ane myle thairby;
Delyverit hir in at the spittail hous, ³⁹¹
And daylie sent hir part of his almous.

Sum knew hir weill, and sum had na knowl-
edge

Of hir, becaus scho was sa deformait
With bylis ⁹ blak ovirspreid in hir visage,
And hir fair colour faidit and alterait.

Yit thay presumit, for hir hie regrait, ¹⁰
And still murning, scho was of nobill kin:
With better will thairfoir they tuik hir in.

¹ expound. ² wreaking. ³ festering, leprous.
⁴ known. ⁵ earth. ⁶ fate. ⁷ beaver. ⁸ gate.
⁹ boils. ¹⁰ grief.

The day passit, and Phebus went to rest,
The cloudis blak ouirquhelmit all the
sky: ⁴⁰¹

God wait gif Cresseid was ane sorrowfull
gest,

Seeing that uncouth fair and herbery ¹¹
But ¹² meit or drink scho dressit hir to ly
In ane dark corner of the hous allone;
And on this wyse, weiping, scho maid hir
mone.

THE COMPLAINT OF CRESSEID

'O sop ¹³ of sorrow, sonken into cair!
O, cative ¹⁴ Cresseid! for now and ever mair
Gane is thy joy, and all thy mirth in eird;
Of all blythnes now art thou blaiknit
bair; ¹⁵ ⁴¹⁰

Thair is na salve may saif the of thy sair.
Fell is thy fortoun, wickit is thy weird;
Thy blys is baneist, and thy bail on
breird; ¹⁶

Under the eirth God gif I gravin wer,
Quhair nane of Grece nor yit of Troy
nicht heird. ¹⁷

'Quhair is thy chalmer wantounlie besene, ¹⁸
With burely ¹⁹ bed and bankouris browderit
bene, ²⁰

Spycis and wyne to thy collatioun,
The cowpis all of gold and silver schene,
The sweit meitis, servit in plaittis clene, ⁴²⁰
With saipheron sals ²¹ of ane gude ses-
soun, ²²

Thy gay garmentis with mony gudely
goun,
Thy plesand lawn pinnit with goldin prene? ²³
All is areir, ²⁴ thy greit royall renoun.

'Quhair is thy garding with thir greissis gay,
And fresche flowris, quhilk the Quene Floray
Had paintit plesandly on everie pane, ²⁵
Quhair thou was wont full merilye in May
To walk and tak the dew be it was day, ⁴²⁹
And heir the merle and mavis mony ane,
With ladyis fair in carrolling ²⁶ to gane,
And se the royal rinkis ²⁷ in thair array,
In garmentis gay, garnischit on everie
grane? ²⁸

¹¹ strange fare and lodging. ¹² Without. ¹³ A sop
is bread soaked in wine. Cressida is soaked in care.
¹⁴ caitiff, unfortunate. ¹⁵ blackened bare. ¹⁶ agrow-
ing. ¹⁷ hear it. ¹⁸ gayly furnished. ¹⁹ goodly.
²⁰ good embroidered tapestries. ²¹ saffron sauce.
²² seasoning. ²³ pin. ²⁴ behind. ²⁵ leaf. ²⁶ circular
dances with song. ²⁷ personages. ²⁸ color.

*Thy greit triumphand fame and hie honour,
 Quhair thow was callit of eirdlye wictis flour —

All is decayit, thy weird is welterit so,¹
 Thy hie estait is turnit in darknes dour.²
 This lipper ludge³ tak for thy burelie bour,
 And for thy bed tak now ane bunchie of stro;

For waitlit⁴ wyne and meitis thow had tho,
 Tak mowlit⁵ breid, peirrie,⁶ and ceder⁷
 sour:

Bot cop and clapper, now is all ago.

*My cleir voice and courtlie carrolling,
 Quhair I was wont with ladyis for to sing,
 Is rawk as ruik,⁸ full hiddeous, hoir, and hace;

My plesand port, all utheris precelling —⁹
 Of lustines¹⁰ I was hald maist conding —¹¹

Now is deformit the figour of my face —
 To luik on it na leid¹² now lyking hes:
 Sowpit in syte,¹³ I say with sair sich-
 ing,⁴⁵⁰

Ludget amang the lipper leid,¹⁴ Allace!

*O ladyis fair of Troy and Grece attend
 My miserie, quhilk nane may comprehend,
 My frivoll fortoun, my infelicitie,
 My greit mischief, quhilk na man can amend;

Be war in tyme, approchis neir the end,
 And in your mynd ane mirroure mak of me;

As I am now, peradventure that ye,
 For all your might, may cum to that same end,

Or ellis war,¹⁵ gif ony war may be. 460

*Nocht is your fairnes bot ane faiding flour,

Nocht is your famous laud and hie honour
 Bot wind inflat in uther mennis eiris;

Your roising¹⁶ reid to rotting sall retour.

Exempill mak of me in your memour,
 Quhilk of sic thingis wofull witnes beiris.

All welth in eird away as wind it weiris;

Be-war, thairfoir, approchis neir the hour;

Fortoun is fikkil, quhen scho beginnis
 and steiris.¹⁷

² turned so. ² heavy. ³ leper lodge. ⁴ choice.
⁵ mouldy. ⁶ perrie, pear-cider. ⁷ cider. ⁸ boarse
 as rook. ⁹ excelling. ¹⁰ fairness. ¹¹ excellent
 (condign). ¹² man. ¹³ Sunk in grief. ¹⁴ leper
 people. ¹⁵ worse. ¹⁶ rosy. ¹⁷ stirs.

Thus chydand with her drerie destenye,⁴⁷⁰
 Weiping, scho woik the nicht fra end to end;

Bot all in vane; hir dule, hir cairfull cry,
 Micht not remeid,¹⁸ nor yit hir murning mend.

Ane lipper lady rais, and till hir wend,
 And said, 'Quhy spurnis thow aganis the wall,

To sla thyself, and mend nathing at all ?

*Sen thy weiping dowbillis bot thy wo,
 I counsall the mak vertew of ane neid;
 To leir to clap thy clapper to and fro, ⁴⁷⁹
 And leir¹⁹ efter the law of lipper leid.'

Thair was na buit,²⁰ bot furth with thame
 scho yeid,²¹

Fra place to place, quhill cauld and houn-
 ger sair

Compellit hir to be ane rank beggair.

That samin tyme of Troy the garnisoun,
 Quhilk had to chiftane worthie Troylus,
 Throw jeopardie of weir had strikken down
 Knechtis of Grece in number marvellous:
 With greit tryumphe and laude victori-
 ous

Agane to Troy richt royallie they raid, ⁴⁸⁹
 The way quhair Cresseid with the lipper
 baid.²²

Seing that companie, thai come all with
 ane stevin;²³

Thay gaif ane cry, and schuik coppis gude
 speid;

Said, 'Worthie lordis, for Goddis lufe of
 hevin,

To us lipper part of your almous deid.'

Than to thair cry nobill Troylus tuik heid,
 Having pietie, neir by the place can pas
 Quhair Cresseid sat, not witting what scho
 was.

Than upon him scho kest up baith her ene,
 And with ane blenk²⁴ it come into his
 thoct

That he sumtime hir face befoir had sene;
 Bot scho was in sic plye²⁵ he knew hir
 nocht;

Yit than hir luik into his mynd it brocht
 The sweit visage and amorous blenking
 Of fair Cresseid, sumtyme his awin darling.

¹⁸ remedy. ¹⁹ Probably a mistake for live. ²⁰ help,
 boot. ²¹ went. ²² abode. ²³ voice. ²⁴ glance.
²⁵ such plight.

Na wonder was, suppois¹ in mynd that he
Tuik hir figure² sa sone, and lo! now
quhy?

The idole of ane thing in cace³ may be
Sa deip imprentit in the fantasy,
That it deludis the wittis outwardly,⁵⁰⁹
And sa appeiris in forme and lyke estait
Within the mynd, as it was figurait.

Ane spark of lufe than till his hart culd
spring,

And kendlit all his bodie in ane fyre,
With hait fevir ane sweit and trimbling
Him tuik, quhill he was reddie to expyre;
To beir his scheild his breist began to tyre;
Within ane quhyle he changit mony hew,
And, nevertheles, not ane ane uther knew.

For knichtlie pietie and memoriall⁵¹⁹
Of fair Cresseid, ane gyrdill can he tak,
Ane purs of gold, and mony gay jowall,
And in the skirt of Cresseid down can
swak:⁴

Than rad away, and not ane word [he]
spak,

Pensive in hart, quhill he come to the toun,
And for greit cair oft syis⁵ almaist fell down.

The lipper folk to Cresseid than can draw,
To se the equall distributioun
Of the almous; but quhan the gold they saw,
Ilk ane to uther prevelie can roun,⁶⁵²⁹
And said, 'Yone lord hes mair affectioun,
How ever it be, unto yone lazarous,
Than to us all; we knaw be his almous.'

'Quhat lord is yone,' (quod scho), 'have
ye na feill,⁷

Hes done to us so greit humanitie?'
'Yes,' (quod a lipper man), 'I knaw him
weill;

Schir Troylus it is, gentill and fre.'⁸
Quhen Cresseid understude that it was he,
Stiffer than steill thair stert ane bitter
stound⁹

Throwout hir hart, and fell down to the
ground.

Quhen scho, ouircome with siching sair and
sad,⁵⁴⁰

With mony cairfull cry and cald
'Ochane!¹⁰

Now is my breist with stormie stoundis
stad,¹¹

Wrappit in wo, ane wretch full will of
wane:¹²

Than swounit scho oft or scho culd re-
frane,

And ever in hir swouning cryit scho thus:
O, fals Cresseid, and trew knicht Troylus!

'Thy lufe, thy lawtie,¹³ and thy gentilnes
I countit small in my prosperitie;

Sa elevait I was in wantounes,⁵⁴⁹
And clam upon the fickill quheill¹⁴ sa hie;

All faith and lufe I promissit to the
Was in the self¹⁵ fickill and frivolous:
O, fals Cresseid, and trew knicht Troilus!

'For lufe of me thow kept gude continence,
Honest and chaist in conversatioun;

Of all women protectour and defence
Thou was, and helpit thair opinioun:¹⁶

My mynd in fleschelic foull affectioun
Was inclynit to lustis lecherous:⁵⁵⁹
Fy, fals Cresseid! O, trew knicht Troylus!

'Lovers, be war, and tak gude heid about
Quhome that ye lufe, for quhome ye
suffer paine;

I lat yow wit, thair is richt few thairout¹⁷
Quhome ye may traist to have trew lufe
agane:

Preif¹⁸ quhen ye will, your labour is in
vaine;

Thairfoir, I reid ye tak thame as ye find,
For thay ar sad as widderoock¹⁹ in wind,

'Becaus I knaw the greit unstabilnes,
Brukkil²⁰ as glas, into my self, I say,⁵⁶⁹

Traisting in uther als greit unfaithfulness,
Als unconstant, and als untrew of fay;²¹

Thocht sum be trew, I wait richt few are
thay;

Quha findis treuth, lat him his lady ruse²²:
Nane but my self, as now, I will accuse.'

Quhen this was said, with paper scho sat
down,

And on this maneir maid hir testament:
'Heir I beteiche²³ my corps and carioun

With wormis and with taidis²⁴ to be rent;
My cop and clapper, and myne orna-
ment,

¹¹ bestead. ¹² devoid of hope. ¹³ loyalty. ¹⁴ wheel
(of Fortune). ¹⁵ were in themselves. ¹⁶ good fame.
¹⁷ existing. ¹⁸ Try. ¹⁹ sober as weather-vane.
²⁰ Brittle. ²¹ faith. ²² praise. ²³ bequeath. ²⁴ toads.

¹ although. ² Had a mental picture of her. ³ per-
chance. ⁴ fling. ⁵ oftentimes. ⁶ whisper. ⁷ know-
ledge. ⁸ generous. ⁹ pang. ¹⁰ Ohone! alas!

And all my gold, the lipper folk sall
have,⁵⁸⁰
Quhen I am deid, to burie me in grave.

'This royall ring, set with this rubie reid,
Quhilk Troylus in drowrie¹ to me send,
To him agane I leif it quhan I am deid,
To mak my cairfull deid unto him
kend:²

Thus I conclude schortlie, and mak ane
end;
My spreit I leif to Diane, quhair scho
dwellis,
To walk with hir in waist woddis and wellis.³

'O, Diomeid! thow hes baith broche and
belt

Quhilk Troylus gave me in takning⁵⁹⁰
Of his trew lufe,—and with that word
scho swelt;⁴

And sone ane lipper man tuik of the
ring,

Syne⁵ buryit hir withouttin taryng:
To Troylus furthwith the ring he bair,
And of Cresseid the deith he can declair.

Quhen he had hard hir greit infirmitie,
Hir legacie and lamentatioun,
And how scho endit in sic povertie,
He swelt for wo, and fell down in ane
swoun;

For greit sorrow his hart to birst was
boun:⁶⁰⁰

Siching full sadlie, said, 'I can no moir;
Scho was untrew, and wo is me thairfoir!'

Sum said he maid ane tomb of merbell gray,
And wrait hir name and superscriptioun,
And laid it on hir grave, quhair that scho
lay,

In goldin letteris, conteining this resoun:
'Lo, fair ladyis, Cresseid of Troyis toun,
Sumtyme countit the flour of womaheid,
Under this stane, late lipper, lyis deid!'⁶⁰⁹

Now, worthie Wemen, in this ballet schort,
Made for your worship and instructioun,
Of cheritie I monische and exhort,
Ming⁷ not your lufe with fals deceptioun;
Beir in your mynd this schort conclu-
sioun

Of fair Cresseid, as I have said befoir:
Sen scho is deid, I speik of hir no moir.

¹ courtship. ² known. ³ fountains. ⁴ swooned,
died. ⁵ Then. ⁶ ready. ⁷ Mingle.

THE FOX, THE WOLF, AND
THE CADGER⁸

QUHILUM⁹ thair wynnit¹⁰ in a wildernes,
As myne authour expreslie can declair,
Ane revand¹¹ wolf, that levit upoun pur-
ches¹²

On bestiall,¹³ and maid him weill to fair;
Was nane sa big about him he wald spair,
And¹⁴ he wer hungrie, outhir for favour or
feid,¹⁵

Bot in his wraith he werryit¹⁶ thame to deid.¹⁷

Swa happynnit him in wetching, as he went,
To meit ane foxe in middis of the way;
He him foirsaw, and feinyeit to be schent,¹⁸
And with ane bek¹⁹ he bad the wolf gud
day.

'Welcum to me,' quod he, 'thow Russell²⁰
gray';

Syne loutit²¹ down, and tuik him be the
hand.

'Ryse vp, Lowrence,²² I leif the²³ for to
stand.

'Quhair hes thow bene this sesoun fra my
sicht?

Thow sall beir office, and my stewart be,
For thow can knap²⁴ down caponis on the
nicht,

And, lowrand law,²⁵ thow can gar hennis de.'
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'that ganis²⁶ not for
me:

And I am rad,²⁷ gif thay me se on far,²⁸
That at my figure beist and bird will scar.'²⁹

'Na,' quod the wolf, 'thow can in covert
creip,

Upoun thy wame,³⁰ and hint³¹ thame be the
heid;

And mak ane suddane schow³² upoun ane
scheip,

Syne³³ with thy wappynnis wirrie him to
deid.'

'Schir,' said the fox, 'ye knaw my rob is
reid,³⁴

And thairfoir thair will na [kyn] beist
abide me,

Thocht I wald be sa fals as for to hide me.'

⁸ Hawker. ⁹ Once upon a time. ¹⁰ dwellt. ¹¹ plun-
dering. ¹² plunder. ¹³ farm live-stock. ¹⁴ If.
¹⁵ feud. ¹⁶ worried. ¹⁷ death. ¹⁸ pretended to be
abashed. ¹⁹ bow. ²⁰ red fellow (fox). ²¹ bent.
²² fox. ²³ give thee leave. ²⁴ snatch. ²⁵ crouching
low. ²⁶ avails. ²⁷ afraid. ²⁸ be scared. ²⁹ belly.
³⁰ seize. ³¹ shove, push, spring. ³² Then. ³³ robe
is red.

'Yis,' quod the wolf, 'throw buskis¹ and
throw breiris,²⁹

Law can thow lour to cum to thine intent.'

'Schir,' said the fox, 'ye wait² weill³ how
it gais;

Ane lang space fra thame thay will feill
my sent,³

Then will thay eschaip, suppois thay suld
be schent;⁴

And I am schamefull for to cum behind
thame

In to the feild, thocht I suld sleipand⁵ find
thame.'

'Na,' quod the wolf, 'thow can cum on the
wind,

For everie wrink,⁶ forsuith, thow hes ane
wyle.'

'Schir,' said the fox, 'that beist ye nicht
call blind,

That nicht not eschaip than fra me ane
myle.

How nicht I ane of thame that wyis⁷ be-
gile?⁴⁰

My tippit twa eiris, and my twa gray ene,
Garris me be kend⁸ quhair I was never
sene.'

'Than,' said the wolf, 'Lowrence, I heir the
le,⁹

And castis for perrellis thy ginnes to de-
fend;¹⁰

Bot all thy seinyes¹¹ sall not avail the,
About the busk with wayis thocht thow

wend;
Falsel¹² will fail ye ay at the latter end;

To bow at bidding, and byde not quhill
thow brest,¹³

Thairfoir I gif the counsall for the best.'

'Schir,' said the fox, 'it is lenterne,¹⁴ ye
se;⁵⁰

I can not fische, for weitting of my feit,
To tak ane banestikkill¹⁵; thocht we baith

suld de,
I haif na uther craft to win my meit;

Bot war it pasche,¹⁶ that men suld pultrie
eit,

As kiddis, lambes, or caponis in to ply,¹⁷

To beir your office than wald I not set by.'¹⁸

'Than,' said the wolf, in wraith, 'wenis¹⁹
thow with wyllis,

And with thy mouny mowis²⁰ me to mat?²¹
It is ane auld dog, doutles, that thow begilis:

Thow wenis to draw the stra befor the
catt!'⁶⁰

'Schir,' said the fox, 'God wait, I mene not
that;

For and I did, it war weill worth that ye
In ane reid raip²² had tyt me till ane tre.

'Bot now I se he is ane fule, perfay,²³

That with his maister fallis in ressoning;

I did bot till assay²⁴ quhat ye wald say;

God wait, my mynd was on ane uther thing;

I sall fulfill in all thing your bidding,

Quhat ever ye chairge, on nichtis or on
dayis.'

'Weill,' quod the wolf, 'I wait weill quhat
thow sayis.⁷⁰

'Bot yit I will thow mak to me ane aith,²⁵

For to be leill attour all levand leid.'²⁶

'Schir,' said the foxe, 'that ane word makis
me wraith,

For now I se ye haif me at ane dreid;²⁷

Yit sall I sweir, suppois it be not neid,

Be Iuppiter, and on pane of my heid,

I salbe trew to yow, quhill²⁸ I be deid.'

With that ane cadgear, with capill²⁹ and
with creillis,³⁰

Come carpand³¹ furth; than Lowrence culd
him spy.

The fox the flewar³² of the fresche heiring
feillis,⁸⁰

And to the wolf he roundis³³ prively:

'Schir, yone ar hering the cadgear caryis by;

Thairfoir I rid³⁴ that we se for sum wayis

To get sum fische aganis thir fasting
dayis.

'Sen I am stewart, I wald we had sum
stuff,

And ye ar silver seik,³⁵ I wait richt weill;

Thocht we wald thig³⁶ yone verray chur-
liche chuff,³⁷

He will not gif us ane hering of his creill,

Befor yone churle on kneis thocht we wald
kneill;

¹ bushes. ² know. ³ scent. ⁴ even if they should be frightened. ⁵ sleeping. ⁶ trick. ⁷ way. ⁸ Cause me to be recognized. ⁹ lie. ¹⁰ seekest for dangers to excuse thy tricks. ¹¹ excuses. ¹² Falsehood. ¹³ do not wait till you are broken. ¹⁴ Lent. ¹⁵ stickleback. ¹⁶ Easter. ¹⁷ in good condition. ¹⁸ decline.

¹⁹ thinkest. ²⁰ josta. ²¹ defeat. ²² red, bloody rope. ²³ in faith. ²⁴ try. ²⁵ oath. ²⁶ loyal beyond all living people. ²⁷ in doubt. ²⁸ till. ²⁹ horse. ³⁰ panniers, baskets. ³¹ shouting. ³² smell. ³³ whispers. ³⁴ advise. ³⁵ penurious. ³⁶ beg. ³⁷ miserly fellow.

Bot yit I trow alsone¹ that ye sall se,⁹⁰
Gif I can craft to bleir yone carlis ee.²

'Schir, ane thing is, and³ we get of yone
pelf,
Ye man tak travell⁴ and mak us sum
supple;⁵
For he that will not labour and help him
self,
In to thir dayis, he is not worth ane fle;
I think to wirk as bessie⁶ as ane be.
And ye sall follow ane litill efterwart,
And gadder hering, for that salbe your
pairt.'

With that he kest ane compas far about,
And strawcht⁷ him down in middis of the
way,¹⁰⁰
As he wer deid he feinyet⁸ him, but dout,⁹
And than upoun lenth unliklie¹⁰ lay;
The qubite he turnit up of his ene tway;
His tounge out hang ane hand braid¹¹ of his
heid,
And still he lay, als straucht as he wer
deid.

The cadgear fand the fox, and he was
fane,¹²
And till him self this softlie can he say:
'At the nixt bait,¹³ in faith, ye salbe flane,¹⁴
And of your skin I sall mak mittenis
tway.'
He lap¹⁵ about [him] lichtlie quhair he
lay,¹¹⁰
And all the trace¹⁶ he trippit on his tais;¹⁷
As he had hard ane pyper play, he gais.

'Heir lyis,' quod he, 'the devill deid in a
dyke:
Sic ane selcouth¹⁸ saw I not this sevin
yeir;
I trow ye haif bene tussillit with sum tyke,¹⁹
That garris²⁰ yow ly sa still withoutin
steir;²¹
Schir foxe, in faith, ye ar deir welcum
heir;
It is sum wyfis malisoun,²² I trow,
For pultrie pyking,²³ that lichtit hes on
yow.

'Thair sall na pedder,²⁴ for purs, nor yit
for glufis,¹²⁰
Nor yit for pointis²⁵ pyke your pellet fra
me;²⁶
I sall of it mak mittenis to my lufis,²⁷
Till hald my handis hait²⁸ quhair ever I
be;
Till Flanderis sall it never sail the se.'
With that in hy,²⁹ he hint³⁰ him by the
heillis,
And with ane swak³¹ he swang him on the
creillis.

Syne³² be the heid the horss in hy hes hint;³³
The fraudfull foxe thairto guid tent hes
tane,³⁴
And with his teith the stoppell,³⁵ or he
stint,³⁶¹²⁹
Pullit out, and syne the hering ane and ane
Out of the creillis he swakkit³⁷ down gude
wane.³⁸
The wolf was war,³⁹ and gadderit spedilie;
The cadgear sang, 'Huntis up, up,' upoun
hie.⁴⁰

Yit at ane burne the cadgear luikit about;
With that the foxe lap quite the creillis
fray;⁴¹
The cadgear wald haif raucht⁴² the foxe ane
rout,⁴³
Bot all for nocht, he wan his hoill⁴⁴ that
day.
Than with ane schout thus can the cadgear
say:
'Abyde, and thow ane nekhering⁴⁵ sall haif,
Is worth my capill, creillis, and all the
laif.'⁴⁶¹⁴⁰

'Now,' quod the foxe, 'I schrew me and
we meit:
I hard quhat thow hecht⁴⁷ to do with my
skin.
Thy handis sall never in thay⁴⁸ mittenis tak
heit,
And thow war hangit, carle, and all thy
kin!
Do furth thy marcat;⁴⁹ at me thow sall not
win;

²⁴ pedlar. ³⁵ laces. ³⁶ do me out of your skin.
²⁷ palms. ³⁸ hot. ³⁹ haste. ⁴⁰ seized. ⁴¹ toss.
³² Then. ³³ seized. ³⁴ has taken careful note.
³⁵ plug, lid. ³⁶ ere he stopped. ³⁷ threw. ³⁸ to
good purpose. ³⁹ aware. ⁴⁰ in a loud voice. ⁴¹ from.
⁴² reached. ⁴³ blow. ⁴⁴ hole.
⁴⁵ A blow; also apparently specially large herring
laid on the top or neck of the basket. Cf. ll. 165-168.
⁴⁶ rest. ⁴⁷ promised. ⁴⁸ those. ⁴⁹ market.

¹ quickly. ² If I know craft to deceive that fellow.
³ if. ⁴ must take pains. ⁵ support. ⁶ busy.
⁷ stretched. ⁸ feigned. ⁹ without doubt. ¹⁰ lay
at length, helpless looking. ¹¹ breadth. ¹² glad.
¹³ baiting-place. ¹⁴ flayed. ¹⁵ leapt. ¹⁶ way.
¹⁷ toes. ¹⁸ strange thing. ¹⁹ worried by some dog.
²⁰ makes. ²¹ stir. ²² curse. ²³ stealing poultry.

And sell thy hering thow hes thair till hie
price,
Ellis thow sall win nocht on thy marchan-
dice.'

The cadgear trimmillit for teyne¹ quhair
that he stuid;

'It is weill worthie,' quod he, 'I want
yone tyke,²

That had not in my hand sa mekle gude¹⁵⁰
As staf or sting,³ yone truker⁴ for to
strike.'

With that lichtlie he lap out ouer ane dyke,
And hakkit down ane staf, for he was tene,⁵
That hevie was and of the holyne⁶ grene.

With that the fox unto the wolf culd wend,
And fand him be the hering, quhair he lyes;
'Schir,' said he than, 'maid I not fair de-
fend?'⁷

Ane wicht⁸ man wantit never, and he war
wyse;

Ane hardie hart is hard for to suppryis.'

Than said the wolf: 'Thow art ane berne⁹
full bald,¹⁶⁰

And wyse at will, in gude tyme¹⁰ be it tald.

'Bot quhat was yone the carle cryit on hie,
And schuik his hand, quod he, hes thow na
feill?'¹¹

'Schir,' said the foxe, 'that I can tell
trewlie;

He said the nekhering was in the creill.'

'Kennis thow that hering?' 'Ye, schir, I
ken it weill,

And at the creill mouth I had it thryis¹²
but dout;

The wecht¹³ thair of neir tit¹⁴ my tuskis
out.

'Now, surelie, schir, mycht we that hering
fang,¹⁵

it wald be fische to us thir fourtie dayis.'

Than said the wolf, 'Now God nor that I
hang,¹⁶

Bot to be thair I wald gif all my clays,¹⁷¹

To se gif that my wappynnis¹⁸ micht it rais.'

'Schir,' said the foxe, 'God wait, I wischit
yow oft,

Quhen that my teith micht not beir it on
loft.

'It is ane side of salmond, as it wair,
And callour,¹⁹ pypand like ane pertrik ee;²⁰
It is worth all the hering ye haif thair,
Ye, and we had it swa, is it worth sic thre.'

'Than,' said the wolf, 'quhat counsale
gevis thow me?'¹⁸⁰

'Schir,' said the foxe, 'wirk efter my
devyis,

And ye sall haif it, and tak yow na sup-
pryis.²¹

'First, ye mon cast ane compas far about,
Syne straucht yow down in middis of the
way;

Baith heid, and feit, and tail ye man
streik²² out,

Hing furth your toung, and clois weill your
ene tway;

Syne se your heid on ane hard place ye lay;
And dout²³ not for na perrell may appeir,

Bot hald yow clois quhen that the carle
cummis neir.

'And thoct ye se ane staf, haif ye na
dout,¹⁹⁰

Bot hald yow winder²⁴ still in to that steid;²⁵
And luik your ene be clois, as thay war out,

And se that ye schrink nouthir fute nor
heid:

Than will the cadgear carle trow ye be
deid,

And in till haist²⁶ will hint yow be the
heillis,

As he did me, and swak yow on his creillis.'

'Now,' quod the wolf, 'I sweir the be my
thrift,

I trow yone cadger carle he will me beir.'²⁷
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'on loft he will yow
lift,

Upoun his creillis, and do him litill deir.'²⁸
Bot ane thing dar I surelie to yow sweir,²⁰¹

Get ye that hering sicker²⁹ in sum place,
Ye sall not fair in fisching³⁰ mair quhill
pasche.

'I sall say *In principio* upoun yow,
And cros your corpis frome the top to tay;

Wend quhen ye will, I dar be warrand now
That ye sall die na suddane deith this day.'

With that the wolf gird up sone and to gay,³¹

¹ trembled for vexation. ² I well deserved to miss that fox. ³ pole. ⁴ swindler. ⁵ angry. ⁶ holly. ⁷ defence. ⁸ brave. ⁹ fellow. ¹⁰ indeed. ¹¹ idea. ¹² thrice. ¹³ weight. ¹⁴ tugged. ¹⁵ get hold of. ¹⁶ God grant that I hang. ¹⁷ clothes. ¹⁸ weapons, teeth.

¹⁹ fresh. ²⁰ shining like the eye of a partridge. ²¹ no surprise take you. ²² stretch. ²³ fear. ²⁴ wonderfully. ²⁵ place. ²⁶ in haste. ²⁷ Ed. Charteris reads, *do not me beir*, dare not lift me. ²⁸ harm, trouble. ²⁹ secure. ³⁰ go a-fishing. ³¹ goes.

And kest ane compas about the cadger
far;

Syne straucht him in the gait,¹ or he come
nar. 210

He laid his halfheid² sicker hard and sad,³
Synne straucht his foure feit fra him, and
his heid,

And hang his tounge furth as the foxe him
bad;

Als still he lay, as he war verray deid,
Rakkand⁴ na thing of the carlis favour nor
feid,⁵

Bot ever upoun the nekhering he thinkis,
And quite forgetis the foxe and all his
wrinkis.

With that the cadger, wavering as the wind,
Come rydand on the laid,⁶ for it was licht,
Thinkand ay on the foxe that was behind,
Upoun quhat wyse revengit on him he
nicht; 221

And at the last of the wolf gat ane sicht,
Quhair he in lenth lay streikit in the gait;
Bot gif he lichtit down, or not, God wait!⁷

'Softlie,' he said, 'I was begilit anis;⁸
Be I begilit twyis, I schrew us baith,
That evill bot⁹ sall licht upoun thy banis,
He suld haif had that hes done me the
skaith.'¹⁰

On hicht he hovit the stalff,¹¹ for he was
wraith,
And hit him with sic will upoun the heid,
Quhill neir he swonit and swalt¹² in to that
steid.¹⁸ 231

Thre battis he buir,¹⁴ or he his feit nicht
find,

Bot yit the wolf was wicht, and wan away.
He nicht not se, he wes sa verray blind,
Nor wit¹⁵ reddilie quhether it wes nicht or
day.

The foxe beheld that service quhair he lay,
And leuch on loft,¹⁶ quhen he the wolf sa
seis,

Baith deif and dosirnit,¹⁷ fall swounand on
his kneis.

He that of ressoun can not be content,
Bot covetis all, is abill all to tyne.¹⁸ 240

¹ stretched himself in the road. ² side of his head.
³ solid. ⁴ recking. ⁵ feud. ⁶ load. ⁷ knows.
⁸ once. ⁹ reward. ¹⁰ harm. ¹¹ On high he raised
the staff. ¹² died. ¹³ place. ¹⁴ blows he bore.
¹⁵ know. ¹⁶ laughed aloud. ¹⁷ dazed. ¹⁸ lose.

The foxe, quhen that he saw the wolf wes
schent,¹⁹

Said to him selff, 'Thir hering sal be myne';
I le, or ellis he was efterwart fyne²⁰
That fand sic wayis his maister for to greif:
With all the fische thus Lowrence tuik his
leif.

The wolf was neir weill dungin to the
deid,²¹

That uneith²² with his lyfe away he wan,
For with the bastoun²³ weill brokin wes his
heid.

The foxe in to his den sone drew him than,
That had betraisit²⁴ his maister and the
man: 250

The ane wantit the hering of his creillis,
The utheris blude was rynnand ouer his
heillis.

MORALITAS

This taill is mingit²⁵ with moralitie,
As I sall schaw sum quhat, or that I ceis:²⁶
The foxe unto the world may likkinit be,
The revand wolf unto ane man but leis,²⁷
The cadger deith, quhome under all men
preis:²⁸

That ever tuik lyfe throw cours of kynd²⁹
man³⁰ die,

As man, and beist, and fische in to the see.

The world, ye wait, is stewart to the
man, 260

Quhill makis man to haif na mynd of deid,³¹
Bot settis for wyunning all the craft thay
can;

The hering I likkin unto the gold sa reid,
Quhillk gart the wolf in perrell put his heid:
Richt swa the gold garris landis and cieteis
With weir³² be waistit, daylie as men seis.

And as the foxe with dissimulance and gile
Gart the wolf wene³³ to haif worschip for
ever,

Richt swa this world with vane gloir for
ane quhile

Flatteris with folk, as thay suld failye
never, 270

Yit suddandlie men seis it oft dissever;
With thame that trowis oft to fill the sek,³⁴
Deith commis behind and nippis thame be
the nek.

¹⁹ defeated. ²⁰ subtle. ²¹ beaten to death.
²² scarcely. ²³ stick. ²⁴ betrayed. ²⁵ mixed.
²⁶ ere I stop. ²⁷ truly. ²⁸ contend. ²⁹ nature.
³⁰ must. ³¹ death. ³² war. ³³ expect. ³⁴ sack.

The micht of gold makis mony men sa blind,
That settis on averice thair felicitie,
That thay forget the cadger cummis behind
To stryke thame, of quhat stait so ever
they be.

Quhat is mair dirk¹ than blind prosperitie?
Quhairfoir I counsall nichtie men to haif
mynd

Of the nekhering, interpret in this kynd. 280

THE TALE OF THE UPLANDISH² MOUSE AND THE BURGESS³ MOUSE

ESOPE, myne author, makis mentioun

Of twa myis, and thay wer sisteris deir,
Of quham the eldest dwelt in ane bor-
rour⁴ toun,

The uther wynnit uponland, weill neir,⁵
Solitar, quhyle under busk, quhyle under
breir,

Quhyllis in the corne, and uther mennis
skaith,⁶

As outlawis dois and levis on thair waith.⁷

This rurall Mous in to the wynter tyde

Had hunger, cauld, and tholit⁸ greit
distres.

The uther Mous that in the burgh can
byde¹⁰

Wes gild brother and maid ane free bur-
gess;

Toll fre als, but custum⁹ mair or les,

And fredome had to ga quhair ever scho list,
Amang the cheis in ark,¹⁰ and meill in kist.¹¹

Ane tyme quhen scho wes full and unfute
sair,¹²

Scho tuik in mynde hir sister uponland,
And langit for to heir of hir weillfair,

To se quhat lyfe scho had under the
wand¹³;

Bairfute, allone, with pykestalf in hir
hand,

As pure¹⁴ pilgryme scho passit out of toun, 20
To seik hir sister baith ouer dail and doun.

Furth mony wilsum¹⁵ wayis can scho walk
Throw mosse and muir, throw bankis,
balk,¹⁶ and breir,

¹ dark. ² country. ³ town. ⁴ borough. ⁵ dwelt
in the country right near. ⁶ harm. ⁷ hunting.
⁸ suffered. ⁹ without taxes. ¹⁰ box. ¹¹ chest.
¹² unfootsoore, comfortable. ¹³ in the open. ¹⁴ A
very. ¹⁵ wild. ¹⁶ ridge.

Scho ranne with mony ane hiddeous quaik,¹⁷
'Cum furth to me, my awin sister deir,
Cry peip anis!' ¹⁸ With that the mous
cryit, 'heir,'

And knew her voce, as kinnisman will do,
Be verray kynd;¹⁹ and furth scho come hir
to.

The hartlie joy, God! gif ye had sene,
Beis kith²⁰ quhen that thir sisteris met; ³⁰
And greit kyndenes was schawin thame
betuene;

For quhyllis thay leuch, and quhyllis for
joy thay gret,²¹

Quhyle kissit sweit, quhyllis in armis plet;²²
And thus thay fure, quhill²³ soberit wes
thair mind,

Syne fute for fute²⁴ unto the chalmer wend.

As I hard say, it was ane sober wane,²⁵

Of fog²⁶ and fairn full febillie was maid,
Ane sillie scheill²⁷ under ane steidfast stane,

Of quhilk the entres was not hie nor braid;
And in the samin²⁸ thay went but mair
abaid,²⁹

Without[in] fyre or candill birnand bricht,⁴⁰
For commounlie sic pykeris³⁰ lufes not licht.

Quhen thay wer lugit thus, thir selie³¹ myse,

The youngest sister unto hir butterie yeid,
And brocht furth nuttis and candil insteid
of spyce;

Gif this wes gude fair, I do it on thame
besyde.³²

The burges mous promptit³³ furth in
pryde,

And said, 'Sister, is this your daylie fude?'
'Quhy not,' quod scho, 'is not this meit
rycht gude?'

'Na, be my saull, I think it bot ane
scorne.'⁵⁰

'Madame,' quod scho, 'ye be the mair
to blame;

My mother said, sister, quhen we were
borne,

That I and ye lay baith within ane wame;³⁴

I keip the rate³⁵ and custume of my dame,
And of my leving in to povertie,³⁶

For landis haif we nane in propertie.'

¹⁷ scream. ¹⁸ once. ¹⁹ instinct. ²⁰ shown.
²¹ wept. ²² folded. ²³ fared till. ²⁴ keeping step.
²⁵ dwelling. ²⁶ moss. ²⁷ A frail shelter (shelling).
²⁸ into the same. ²⁹ without more delay. ³⁰ stealers.
³¹ these innocent. ³² let them judge(?). ³³ started.
³⁴ womb. ³⁵ style. ³⁶ my being left poor.

'My fair sister,' quod scho, 'haif me excusit,

This rude dyet and I can nocht accord;
Till tender meit my stomok is ay usit,
For quhylls I fair als weill as ony lord;

Thir widdirit¹ peis and nuttis, or thay be bord,²

Will brek my teith, and mak my wame full sklender,³

Quhilk wes befor usit to meittis tender.'

'Weill, weill, sister,' quod the rurall Mous,
'Gif it pleis yow, sic thingis as ye se heir,

Baith meit and drink, harberie and hous,
Sal be your awin, will ye remane all yeir;
Ye sall it haif with blyith and merie cheir,

And that suld mak the maissis⁴ that ar rude,

Amang freindis, richt tender and wonder gude. 70

'Quhat plesure is in feistis delicate,
The quhilkis ar gevin with ane glowmand⁵ brow?

Ane gentill hart is better recreat
With blyith curage, than seith⁶ till him ane kow:

Ane modicum is mair for till allow,⁷
Swa that gude will be kerver at the dais,
Than thrawin⁸ will and mony spycit mais.'

For all hir merie exhortatioun,
This burges mous had lytill will to sing,
Bot hevillie scho kest hir browis down, 80
For all the daynteis that scho culd hir bring.

Yit at the last scho said, half in hething,⁹
'Sister, this victuall and your royall feist
May weill suffice unto ane rurall beist.

'Lat be this hole, and cum into my place;
I sall to yow schaw be experience
My Gude Fryday is better nor your Pace; 10
My dische weschingis is worth your haill¹¹ expence;

I haif housis anew¹² of greit defence;
Of eat nor fall-trap I haif na dreid.' 90
'I grant,' quod scho; and on togidder thay yeid.¹³

¹ These withered. ² ere they are bored. ³ belly full lean. ⁴ messes, food. ⁵ glooming, sullen. ⁶ boil. ⁷ is more to be esteemed. ⁸ perverse. Harl. reads *thrawin vull*, ill-tempered face. ⁹ scorn. ¹⁰ Easter. ¹¹ whole. ¹² enough. ¹³ went.

In stubbill array¹⁴ throw [rankest] gers¹⁵ and corne,

And under buskis¹⁶ prevelie couth they creip,

The eldest wes the gyde and went beforne,
The younger to hir wayis tuke gude keip.¹⁷

On nicht thay ran, and on the day can sleip;
Quhill in the morning, or the laverock¹⁸ sang,

Thay fand the toun, and in blythlie couth gang.

Nocht fer fra thyne¹⁹ unto ane worthie wane²⁰

This burges brocht thame sone quhar thai suld be; 100

Without God speid²¹ thair herberie wes tane,
Into ane spence²² with vittell greit plentie;

Baith cheis and butter upone thair skelfis hie,²³

And flesche and fische aneuch, of freshe and salt,

And sekkis full of meill and eik of malt.

Efter quhen thay disposit wer to dyne,
Withouttin grace thay wesche²⁴ and went to meit,

With all the coursis that cukis culd devyne,
Muttoun and beif strikin in tailieis greit; 25

And lordis fair thus couth thay counterfeit, 110

Except ane thing — thay drank the watter cleir

Insteid of wyne; bot yit thay maid gude cheir.

With blyith upcast and merie countenance,
The eldest sister sperit at hir gaist,²⁶

Gif that scho be ressone fand difference
Betuix that chalmer and hir sarie²⁷ nest,

'Ye, dame,' quod scho, 'how lang will this lest?' 120

'For evermair, I wait,²⁸ and langer to.'
'Gif it be swa, ye ar at eis,' quod scho.

Til eik²⁹ thair cheir ane subcharge³⁰ furth scho brocht, 120

Ane plait of grottis³¹ and ane dische full of meill;

¹⁴ Bannatyne MS. reads *In skugry ay*, In concealment ever. ¹⁵ grass. ¹⁶ bushes. ¹⁷ heed. ¹⁸ lark. ¹⁹ thence. ²⁰ dwelling. ²¹ i.e., without greeting their hosts. ²² larder. ²³ shelves high. ²⁴ washed. ²⁵ cut in great slices. ²⁶ asked of her guest. ²⁷ sorry. ²⁸ wot. ²⁹ To increase. ³⁰ second course. ³¹ hulled oats.

Thraf caikkis¹ als I trow scho spairit
nocht,
Aboundantie about hir for to deill;
And mane² full fyne scho brocht instead
of geill,³
And ane quhyte candill out of ane coffer
stall,⁴
Insteid of spyce to gust⁵ thair mouth with-
all.

Thus maid thay merie quhil⁶ thay micht
na mair,
And, 'Haill, Yule, haill!' cryit upon
hie.
Yit efter joy oftymes cummis cair,
And troubill efter greit prosperitie, ¹³⁰
Thus as thay sat in all thair jolitie,
The spenser⁷ come with keyis in his hand,
Opinnit the dure, and thame at denner fand.

Thay taryit nocht to wesche, as I suppose,
But on to ga quha that micht forrest
win.
The burges had ane hoill, and in scho gois,
Hir sister had na hoill to hyde hir in;
To se that selie mous it wes greit syn,
So desolate and will of ane gude reid;⁸
For veray dreid scho fell in swoun neir
deid. ¹⁴⁰

Bot as God wald, it fell ane happy cace;
The spenser had na laser⁹ for to byde,
Nouthir to seik nor serche, to sker¹⁰ nor
chace,
Bot in he went, and left the dure up
wyde.
The bald burges his passing weill hes
spyde;
Out of hir hoill scho come and cryit on hie,
'How fair ye sister? Cry peip, quhair-ever
ye be!'

This rural Mous lay flatling on the ground,
And for the deith scho wes full sair dred-
and,¹¹ ¹⁴⁹
For till hir hart straik mony wofull stound;¹²
As in ane fever scho trimbillit fute and
hand;
And quhan hir sister in sic ply¹³ hir fand,
For verray pietie scho began to greit,¹⁴
Syne confort hir with wordis humbill and
sweet.

¹ Unleavened cakes. ² fine bread. ³ jelly. ⁴ stole.
⁵ tickle. ⁶ till. ⁷ butler, keeper of the spence.
⁸ lacking good counsel. ⁹ leisure. ¹⁰ scare. ¹¹ sore
dreading. ¹² pang. ¹³ such plight. ¹⁴ weep.

'Quhy ly ye thus? Ryse up, my sister deir,
Cum to your meit, this perrell is over-
past.'

The uther answerit hir with hevie cheir,
'I may no eit, sa sair I am agast,
I had lever thir fourtie dayis fast,
With watter caill¹⁵ and to gnaw benis or
peis, ¹⁶⁰
Than all your feist in this dreid and diseis.'

With fair tretie¹⁶ yit scho gart¹⁷ hir upryse,
And to the burde thay went and togidder
sat;
And scantlie had thay drunken anis or twyse,
Quhen in come Gib-Hunter, our jolie cat,
And bad God speid. The burges up with
that,
And till the hole scho went as fyre of flint:
Bawdronis¹⁸ the uther be the bak hes hint.¹⁹

Fra fute to fute he kest hir to and fra,
Quhylis up, quhylis down, als cant²⁰ as ony
kid; ¹⁷⁰
Quhylis wald he lat hir run under the stra,
Quhylis wald he wink, and play with her
bukheid.²¹
Thus to the selie mous greit pane he did,
Quhill at the last, throw fortune and gude
hap,
Betuix ane burde²² and the wall scho crap.

And up in haist behind ane parralling²³
Scho clam so hie that Gilbert micht not
get hir,
Syne be the cluke²⁴ thair craftelie can hing,
Till he wes gane, hir cheir wes all the
better.
Syne down scho lap quhen thair wes nane
to let²⁵ hir, ¹⁸⁰
And to the burges mous loud can scho cry:
'Fairweill, sister, thy feist heir I defy!'²⁶

'Thy mangerie is myngit²⁷ all with cair,
Thy guse is gude, thy gansell²⁸ sour as
gall;
The subcharge of thy service is bot sair,
So sall thow find efterwart na fail.²⁹
I thank yone courtayne and yone perpall
wall
Of my defence now fra ane crewell beist.
Almychtie God, keip me fra sic ane feist!

¹⁵ very thin broth. ¹⁶ entreaty. ¹⁷ caused.
¹⁸ Puss. ¹⁹ seized. ²⁰ playful. ²¹ hide-and-seek.
²² board. Bann. *dressour*. ²³ partition. ²⁴ claw.
²⁵ hinder. ²⁶ renounce. ²⁷ Thy feast is mingled.
²⁸ sauce. ²⁹ without doubt. Bann. *may fall*.

'Wer I into the kith¹ that I come fra, ¹⁹⁰
 For weill nor wo suld never cum agane.'
 With that scho tuke hir leif and furth can ga,
 Quhylis throw the corne, and quhylis
 throw the plane;
 Quhen scho wes furth and fre, scho wes
 ful fane,
 And merilie markit² unto the mure:
 I can not tell how eftirwart³ scho fure.⁴

Bot I hard say scho passit to hir den,
 Als warme as woll, suppose⁵ it wes not
 greit,
 Full beinly⁶ stuffit, baith but and ben,⁷
 Of beinis and nuttis, peis, ry, and quheit;
 Quhen ever scho list, scho had aneuch to
 eit, ²⁰¹
 In quyet and eis, withoutin ony dreid;
 Bot to hir sisteris feist na mair scho yeid.⁸

MORALITAS

Friendis, ye may find, and ye will tak heid,
 In to this fabill ane gude moralitie;
 As fitchis myngit⁹ ar with nobill seid,
 Swa intermynglit is adversitie
 And als troubill, and sum vexatioun,
 With eirthlie joy, swa that na estait is fre
 That ar not content of small possessioun,
 And namelie¹⁰ thay quhilk climmis up
 maist hie. ²¹¹

Blissit be sempill lyfe withoutin dreid,
 Blissit be sober feist in quietie:
 Quha hes aneuch, of na mair hes he neid,
 Thocht it be lytill into quantitie.
 Greit abundance and blind prosperitie
 Oftymes makis ane evill conclusioun;
 The sweitest lyfe, thairfoir, in this cuntrie
 Is sickernes,¹¹ with small possessioun.

Thy awin fyre, my friend, sa it be bot ane
 gleid,¹² ²²⁰
 It warmis weill, and is worth gold to thee;
 And Solomon sayis, gif that thow will reid,
 'Under the hevin thair can not better be,
 Than ay be blyth and leif in honestie.'
 Quhairfoir I may conclude be this ressoun:
 Of eirthly joy it beris maist degre,
 Blythnes in hart, with small possessioun.¹³

¹ native place. ² hastened. ³ Bannatyne, Char-
 teris and Harleian read *weill thairrefter*. ⁴ fared. ⁵ al-
 though. ⁶ comfortably. ⁷ both outer and inner room.
⁸ went. ⁹ vetches mixed. ¹⁰ especially. ¹¹ security.
¹² one coal. ¹³ The Harleian text has an additional
 stanza after line 219.

ROBIN AND MAKIN

ROBENE sat on gud grene hill,
 Kepand a flock of fe;¹⁴
 Mirry Makyne said him till,¹⁵
 'Robene, thow rew¹⁶ on me;
 I haif the luvit lowd and still,
 Thir yeiris two or thre;
 My dule in dern bot gif thow dill,¹⁷
 Doutless but dreid I de.'¹⁸

Robene answerit, 'Be the rude,¹⁹
 Nathing of lufe I know,
 Bot keipis my scheip undir yone wid,²⁰ ¹⁶
 Lo quhair thay raik on raw:²¹
 Quhat hes marrit the in thy mude,
 Makyne, to me thow schaw;
 Or quhat is lufe, or to be lude?²²
 Fane wald I leir²³ that law.

'At luvis lair²⁴ gife thow will leir,
 Tak thair ane a, b, c;
 Be heynd,²⁵ courtass, and fair of feir,²⁶
 Wyse, hardy, and fre; ²⁰
 So that no denger do the deir,²⁷
 Quhat dule in dern thow dre;²⁸
 Preiss the²⁹ with pane at all poweir,
 Be patient and previe.'

Robene answerit hir agane,
 'I wait³⁰ noch quhat is lufe;
 But I haif mervell in certane
 Quhat makis the this wanrufe;³¹
 The weddir is fair, and I am fane,
 My scheip gois hail aboif;³² ²⁰
 And³³ we wald play us in this plane,
 Thay wald us bayth reproif.'

'Robene, tak tent³⁴ unto my tail,
 And wrik all as I reid,
 And thow sall haif my hairt all hail,
 Eik and my maidenheid.
 Sen God sendis bute for baill³⁵
 And for murnyng remeid,³⁶
 In dern with the, bot gif I daill,³⁷
 Dowtles I am bot deid.' ⁴⁰

'Makyne, to morne this ilk a tyde,³⁸
 And ye will meet me heir, —

¹⁴ sheep. ¹⁵ to. ¹⁶ have pity. ¹⁷ My secret
 grief unless thou assuage. ¹⁸ surely I die. ¹⁹ cross.
²⁰ wood. ²¹ range in row. ²² loved. ²³ learn.
²⁴ lore. ²⁵ gentle. ²⁶ look. ²⁷ daunt. ²⁸ What
 woe in secret thou endure. ²⁹ Exert thyself. ³⁰ wot.
³¹ unhappiness. ³² all together above. ³³ If. ³⁴ heed.
³⁵ remedy for harm. ³⁶ compensation. ³⁷ Unless I
 deal in secret with thee. ³⁸ tomorrow this same time.

Peraventure my scheip may gang besyd,¹
 Quhill we haif liggit² full neir;
 Bot mawgre haif I and I byd,³
 Fra thay begin to steir;⁴
 Quhat lysis on hairt I will nocht hyd;
 Makyn, than mak gud cheir.'

'Robene, thow reivis me roif⁵ and rest;
 I luvè bot the allane.'

'Makyne, adew, the sone gois west,
 The day is neir hand gane.'

'Robene, in dule I am so drest,
 That lufe wilbe my bane.'

'Ga lufe, Makyne, quhair evir thow list,
 For lemman I lue nane.'

'Robene, I stand in sic a styll;⁶
 I sicht,⁷ and that full sair.'

'Makyne, I haif bene heir this quhyle;
 At hame God gif I wair.'⁸

'My huny, Robene, talk ane quhyle,
 Gif thow will do na mair.'

'Makyne, sum uthir man begyle,
 For hamewart I will fair.'

Robene on his wayis went

Als licht as leif of tre;

Mawkin murnit in hir intent;⁹

And trowd him nevir to se.

Robene brayd atour the bent;¹⁰

Than Mawkyne cryit on hie,

'Now ma thow sing, for I am schent!¹¹

Quhat alis lufe at me?'¹²

Mawkyne went hame withowttin fail,

Full wery eftir cowth weip.

Than Robene in a ful fair daill

Assemblit all his scheip.

Be that sum pairte of Mawkynis aill

Outthrow his hairt coud creip;

He fallowit hir fast thair till assaill,

And till hir tuke gude keip.

'Abyd, abyd, thow fair Makyne,

A word for ony thing;

For all my luvè it sal be thyne,

Withowttin depairting.

All hail thy harte for till haif myne¹³

Is all my cuvating;

My scheip to morne quhill¹⁴ houris nyne

Will neid of no keeping.'

'Robene, thow hes hard sounng and say,
 In gestis and storeis auld,

"The man that will nocht quhen he may
 Sall haif nocht quhen he wald."

I pray to Jesu every day

Mot eik¹⁵ thair cairis cauld,

That first preissis¹⁶ with the to play,

Be firth,¹⁷ forrest, or fauld.'¹⁸

'Makyne, the nicht is soft and dry,

The weddir is warne and fair,

And the grene woid rycht neir us by

To walk attour all quhair;¹⁹

Thair ma na janglour²⁰ us espy,

That is to lufe contrair;

Thairin, Makyne, bath ye and I

Unsene we ma repair.'

'Robene, that warld is all away

And quyt brocht till ane end,

And nevir agane thairto perfoy²¹

Sall it be as thow wend;²²

For of my pane thow maid it play,

And all in vane I spend;

As thow hes done, sa sall I say,

Murne on, I think to mend.'

'Mawkyne, the howp of all my heill,²³

My hairt on the is sett,

And evirmair to the be leill,

Quhill I may leif but lett;²⁴

Nevir to fail, as utheris feill,

Quhat grace that evir I gett.'

'Robene, with the I will nocht deill;

Adew, for thus we mett.'

Makyne went hame blyth annewche,

Attour the holtis hair;²⁵

Robene murnit, and Makyne lewche;²⁶

Scho sang, he sichit²⁷ sair;

And so left him, bayth w and wrewche,²⁸

In dolour and in cair,

Kepand his hird under a huche,²⁹

Amangis the holtis hair.

THE GARMENT OF GOOD LADIES

WALD my gud lady lufe me best,

And wirk eftir my will,

I suld ane garmond gudlied

Gar mak hir body till.³⁰

¹ stray. ² while we lie (have lain). ³ confounded
 be I if I abide. ⁴ stir. ⁵ bereave me of quiet.
⁶ state. ⁷ sigh. ⁸ God grant I were. ⁹ desire.
¹⁰ started across the moor. ¹¹ lost. ¹² What has love
 against me? ¹³ To have thy heart wholly mine. ¹⁴ till.

¹⁵ increase. ¹⁶ try. ¹⁷ woodland. ¹⁸ fold. ¹⁹ To
 walk about everywhere. ²⁰ gossip. ²¹ by my faith.
²² weened. ²³ hope of all my health. ²⁴ without
 ceasing. ²⁵ Over the hoar hills. ²⁶ laughed. ²⁷ sighed.
²⁸ woeful and wretched. ²⁹ cliff. ³⁰ Cause to be
 made for her body.

Off he ¹ honour suld be hir hud,
 Upoun hir heid to weir,
 Garueist with governance so gud,
 Na demyng suld hir deir.²
 Hir sark ³ suld be hir body nixt,
 Of chetetic so quhyt, 10
 With schame and dreid togidder mixt,
 The same suld be perfyte.

Hir kirtill suld be of elene constance,
 Lasit with lesum lufe,⁴
 The mailleis of continuance ⁵
 For nevir to remufe.

Hir gown suld be of gudliness,
 Weill ribband with renowne,
 Purfillit ⁶ with plesour in ilk place,
 Furrit with fyne fassoun.⁷ 20

Hir belt suld be of benignitie,
 About hir middill meit;

¹ high. ² No censure should injure her. ³ shift.
⁴ Laced with lawful love. ⁵ eyelet-holes of perseverance.
⁶ Adorned. ⁷ fashion.

Hir mantill of humilitie,
 To tholl ⁸ bayth wind and weit.

Hir hat suld be of fair having,⁹
 And hir tepat ¹⁰ of trewth;
 Hir patelet of gude pansing;¹¹
 Hir hals ribbane ¹² of rewth.¹³

Hir slevis suld be of esperance,
 To keip hir fra dispair; 30
 Hir gluis of gud govirnance,
 To gyd hir fyngearis fair.

Hir schone ¹⁴ suld be of sickernes,¹⁵
 In syne that scho nocht slyd;
 Hir hoiss of honestie, I ges,
 I suld for hir provyd.

Wald scho put on this garmond gay,
 I durst sweir by my seill,¹⁶
 That scho woir nevir grene nor gray
 That set ¹⁷ hir half so weill. 40

⁸ endure. ⁹ behavior. ¹⁰ tippet. ¹¹ Her ruff of good thought. ¹² neck-ribbon. ¹³ pity. ¹⁴ shoes.
¹⁵ sureness. ¹⁶ seal (?) happiness (?). ¹⁷ became.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

THE GOLDEN TARGE

BRYCHT as the stern¹ of day begouth to
 schyne,
 Quhen gone to bed war Vesper and Lucyne,
 I raise, and by a rosere² did me rest;
 Up sprang the goldyn candill matutynne,
 With clere depurit bemes cristallyne,
 Glading the mery foulis in thair nest;
 Or Phebus was in purpur kaip³ revest
 Up raise the lark, the hevyns menstrale
 fyne,
 In May, in till a morow myrthfullest.

Full angellike thir birdis sang thair houris⁴
 Within thair courtyns grene, in to thair
 bouris,
 Apparalit quhyte and red, wyth blomes
 suete;
 Anamalit was the felde wyth all colouris,
 The perly droppis schake in silvir schouris,
 Quhill all in balme did branch and levis
 flete;⁵
 To part fra Phebus did Aurora grete,⁶
 Hir cristall teris I saw hyng on the flouris,
 Quhilk he for lufe all drank up with his
 hete.

For mirth of May, wyth skippis and wyth
 hoppis,
 The birdis sang upon the tender croppis,⁷
 With curiouse note, as Venus chapell
 clerikis:
 The rosis yong, new spreding of thair knop-
 pis,⁸
 War powderit bryecht with hevinly beriall⁹
 droppis,
 Throu bemes rede, birnyng as ruby sper-
 kis;
 The skyes rang for schoutyng of the
 larkis,
 The purpur hevyn ourseailit in silvir slop-
 pis¹⁰
 Ourgilt the treis, branchis, leivis and
 barkis.

Donn throu the ryce¹¹ a ryvir ran wyth
 stremys,
 So lustily agayn thai lykand lemys,¹²
 That all the lake¹³ as lamp did leme of
 licht,
 Quhilk schadout all about wyth twynkling
 glemis;
 That bewis¹⁴ bathit war in secund bemys
 Throu the reflex of Phebus visage bryecht;
 On every syde the hegies raise on hicht,¹⁵
 The bank was grene, the bruke was full of
 bremys,¹⁶
 The stanneris¹⁷ clere as stern in frosty
 nicht.

The cristall air, the sapher firmament,
 The ruby skyes of the orient,
 Kest beriall bemes on emerant bewis
 grene;
 The rosy garth¹⁸ depaynt and redolent,¹⁹
 With purpur, azure, gold, and goulis gent²⁰
 Arayed was, by dame Fflora the quene,
 So nobily, that joy was for to sene;²¹
 The roch²² agayn the ryvir resplendent
 As low²³ enlumnit all the leves schene.²⁴

Quhat thron the mery foulis armony,
 And throu the ryveris sounn that ran me by,
 On Fflorais mantill I slepit as I lay,
 Quhare sone in to my dremes fantasy
 I saw approach agayn the orient sky,
 A saill, als quhite as blossom upon
 spray,
 Wyth merse²⁵ of gold, bryecht as the stern
 of day;
 Quhilk tendit to the land full lustily,
 As falcounn swift desyrouse of hir pray.

And hard on burd²⁶ unto the blomyt
 medis,
 Among the grene rispis²⁷ and the redis,
 Arrivit sche; quhar fro anon thare lan-
 dis
 Ane hundreth ladies, lusty in to wedis,

¹ star. ² rose-garden. ³ garment. ⁴ services.
⁵ float. ⁶ weep. ⁷ tops. ⁸ buds. ⁹ beryl.
¹⁰ spangled in silver doublet.

¹¹ thickets. ¹² in those pleasant gleams. ¹³ water.
¹⁴ boughs. ¹⁵ on high. ¹⁶ the fish bream. ¹⁷ gravel
 on the bottom. ¹⁸ garden. ¹⁹ fine red. ²⁰ see.
²¹ rock. ²² flame. ²³ bright. ²⁴ round-top on a
 mast. ²⁵ aground. ²⁶ grasses.

Als fresch as flouris that in May up spre-
dis,

In kirtillis grene, withoutyn kell¹ or
bandis;²

Thair brycht hairis hang gletering on the
strandis

In tressis clere, wyppit³ wyth goldyn
thredis,

With pappis⁴ quhite, and middillis small
as wandis.

Discrive I wald, bot quho coud wele en-
dyte

How all the feldis wyth thai lilies quhite
Depaynt war brycht, quhilk to the hevin
did glete:⁵

Noucht thou, [H]omer, als fair as thou coud
wryte,

For all thine ornate stilis so perfyte;

Nor yit thou, Tullius, quhois lippis suete

Off rethorike did in to termis flete:⁶

Your aureate tongis both bene all to lyte,⁷

For to compile that paradise complete.

Thare saw I Nature, and [als dame] Venus
quene,

The fresch Aurora, and lady Flora schene,

Iuno, Appollo⁸ and Proserpyna,

Dyane the goddesse chaste of woddis grene,

My lady Cleo, that help of Makaris⁹
bene,¹⁰

Thetes, Pallas, and prudent Minerva,

Fair feynit¹¹ Fortune, and lemand¹² Lu-
cina,

Thir mychti quenis in crounis mycht be
sene,

Wyth bemys blith, bricht as Lucifera.

There saw I May, of myrthfull monethis
quene,

Betwix Aprile and June, her sister¹³ schene,

Within the gardying walking up and
down,

Quham of the foulis gladdith al bedene:¹⁴

Scho was full tender in hir yeris grene.

Thare saw I Nature present hir a gounn

Rich to behald, and nobil of renounn,

Off evry hew that under the hevin that
bene

Depaynt, and broud¹⁵ be gude propor-
cionn.

Full lustily thir ladyes all in fere¹⁶
Enterit within this park of most plesere,
Quhare that I lay our helit¹⁷ wyth levis
ronk;
The mery foulis, blisfullest of chere,
Salust¹⁸ Nature, me thoct, on thair man-
ere,
And evry blome on branch, and eke on
bonk,
Opnyt and spred thair balmy levis donk,
Full low enclynyng to thair Quene so clere,
Quham of thair nobill norising thay thonk.

Syne¹⁹ to dame Flora, on the samyn
wyse,
Thay saluse, and thay thank a thousand
syse;²⁰
And to dame Venus, lufis mychti quene,
Thay sang ballattis in lufe, as was the
gyse,²¹
With amoureuse notis lusty to devise,
As thay that had lufe in thair hertis
grene;
Thair hony throtis, opnyt fro the splene,²²
With werblis suete did perse the hevinly
skyes,
Quhill loud resownyt the firmament se-
rene.

Ane othir court thare saw I consequent,
Cupide the king, wyth bow in handy bent,²³
And dredefull arowis grundyn scharp
and square;
Thare saw I Mars, the god armypotent,
Aufull and sterne, strong and corpolent;
Thare saw I crabbit Saturn ald and haire,²⁴
His luke was lyke for to perturb the
aire;
Thare was Mercurius, wise and eloquent,
Of rethorike that fand the flouris faire;

There was the god of gardingis, Priapus;
Thare was the god of wildernes, Phanus;
And Ianus, god of entree delytable;²⁵
Thare was the god of fludis, Neptunus;
Thare was the god of wyndis, Eolus,
With variand luke, rycht lyke a lord un-
stable;
Thare was Bacus, the gladder of the
table;
Thare was Pluto, the elrich²⁶ incubus,
In cloke of grene, his court usit no sable.

¹ caul. ² fillets. ³ bound. ⁴ breasts. ⁵ shine.
⁶ float in rhetorical terms. ⁷ too inadequate. ⁸ Prob-
ably for Latona. ⁹ poets. ¹⁰ is. ¹¹ tricky.
¹² gleaming. ¹³ Plural. ¹⁴ In whom the birds rejoice
all suddenly. ¹⁵ embroidered.

¹⁶ in company. ¹⁷ covered. ¹⁸ saluted. ¹⁹ after-
wards. ²⁰ times. ²¹ guise, fashion. ²² from the
heart, i.e. joyously. ²³ hoar. ²⁴ elvish.

And eviry one of thir, in grene arayit,
On harp or lute full merily thai playit,
Aud sang ballettis with miehty notis
clere;

Ladies to dance full sobirly assayit, ¹³⁰
Endlang ¹ the lusty ryvir so thai mayit;
Thair observance rycht hevynly was
to here;
Than crap I throu the levis, and drew
nere,

Quhare that I was richt sudaynly affrayit,
All throu a luke, quhilk I have boucht
full dere.

And schortly for to speke, be lufis quene
I was aspyit, scho bad hir archearis kene
Go me arrest; and thay no time delayit;
Than ladyes fair lete fall thair mantillis
greu[e],

With bowis big, in tressit hairis schene, ¹⁴⁰
All sudaynly thay had a felde arayit;
And yit rycht gretly was I noucht af-
frayit,

The party was so plesand for to sene,
A wonder lusty bikkir ² me assayit.

And first of all, with bow in hand ybent,
Come dame Beautee, rycht as scho wald me
schent; ³

Syne folowit all hir dameselis yfere, ⁴
With mony diverse afull instrument,
Vnto the pres; Fair Having wyth hir
went,

Fyne Portrature, Plesance, and lusty
Chere. ¹⁵⁰

Than come Resoun, with schelde of gold
so clere,

In plate and maille, as Mars armypotent,
Defendit me that nobil chevallere.

Syne tender Youth come wyth hir virgyns
ying,

Grene Innocence, and schamefull Abaising,
And quaking Drede, wyth humble Obe-
dience;

The Goldyn Targe harmyt thay nothing;
Curage in thame was noucht begonne to
spring;

Full sore thay dred to done a violence:

Suete Womanhede I saw cum in pres-
ence, ¹⁶⁰

Of artilye ⁵ a warld sche did in bring,
Servit wyth ladyes full of reverence.

Scho led with hir Nurture and Lawlynes,
Contenance, ⁶ Pacience, Gude Fame, and
Stedfastnes,

Discretioun, Gentrise, ⁷ and Considerance,
Leuefell ⁸ Company, and Honest Besynes,
Benigne Luke, Mylde Chere, and Sobirnes :
All thir bure ganyeis ⁹ to do me gre-
vance;

But Resoun bure the Targe wyth sik con-
stance,

Thair scharp assayes mycht do no dures ¹⁰
To me, for all thair awfull ordynance. ¹⁷¹

Unto the pres persewit Hie Degre,
Hir folowit ay Estate and Dignitee,
Comparisoun, Honour, and Noble Array,
Will, Wantonnes, Renoun, and Libertee,
Richesse, Fredomm, and eke Nobilitee:

Wit ye thay did thair baner hye display;
A cloud of arowis as hayle schour lousit
thay,

And schot, quhill ¹¹ wastit was thair artilye,
Syne went abak rebutit ¹² of thair
pray. ¹⁸⁰

Quhen Venus had persavit this rebute,
Dissymilance scho bad go mak persute,
At all powere ¹³ to perse the Goldyn
Targe;

And scho that was of doubilnes the rute
Askit hir choise of archeris in refute. ¹⁴

Venus the best bad hir to wale ¹⁵ at large;
Scho tuke Presence plicht ¹⁶ anker of the
barge,

And Fair Callyng that wele a flayn ¹⁷ coud
schute,

And Cherising for to complete hir
charge.

Dame Hamelynes ¹⁸ scho tuke in com-
pany, ¹⁹⁰

That hardy was, and hende ¹⁹ in archery,
And brocht dame Beautee to the felde
agayn;

With all the choise of Venus chevalry
Thay come, and bikkerit ²⁰ unabaisitly.

The schour of arowis rappit on as rayn ;
Perilouse Presence, that mony syre has
slayne,

The batail broucht on bordour ²¹ hard us by,
The salt ²² was all the sarar suth to sayn.

⁶ Restraint. ⁷ Gentleness. ⁸ Lawful. ⁹ these
bore arrows. ¹⁰ harm. ¹¹ till. ¹² balked. ¹³ By
all means. ¹⁴ as a (last) resort (?) ¹⁵ choose. ¹⁶ sheet-
anchor, chief anchor. ¹⁷ arrow. ¹⁸ Homeliness.
¹⁹ skilled. ²⁰ fought. ²¹ on the beach. ²² assault.

¹ along. ² A wondrous pleasant strife. ³ harm.
⁴ together. ⁵ artillery.

Thik was the schote of grundyn dartis
kene;

Bot Resoun with the Scheld of Gold so
schene

Warly¹ defendit, quho so evir assayit;

The aufull stoure² he manly did sustene,
Quhill³ Presence kest a pulder⁴ in his
ene,

And than as a drunkyn man he all for-
vayit:⁵

Quhen he was blynd the fule wyth hym
thay playit,

And banyst hym among the bewis grene;
That sory sicht me sudaynly affrayit.

Than was I woundit to the deth wele nere,
And yoldyn as a wofull prisonere

To lady Beautee in a moment space;²¹⁰

Me thought scho semyt lustiar of chere
Efter that Resoun tynt⁶ had his eyne
clere,

Than of before, and lufiare of face:

Quhy was thou blyndit, Resoun? quhi,
allace!

And gert⁷ ane hell my paradise appere,
And mercy seme, quhare that I fand no
grace.

Dissymulance was besy me to sile,⁸

And Fair Calling did oft pouon me smyle,

And Cherising me fed wyth wordis fair;

New Acquyntance embracit me a quhile,²²⁰

And favouryt me, quhill men mycht ga ane
myle,

Syne tuk hir leve, I saw hir nevir mare:

Than saw I Dangere toward me repair,

I coud eschew hir presence be no wyle,

On syde scho lukit wyth ane fremyt
fare.⁹

And at the last departing coud hir dresse,¹⁰

And me delyverit unto Hevynesse

For to remayne, and scho in cure me
take.

Be this the Lord of Wyndis, wyth wodenes,¹¹

God Eolus, his bugill blew I gesse;²³⁰

That with the blast the levis all to-schuke,

And sudaynly, in the space of a luke,

All was hyne¹² went, thare was bot wilder-
nes,

Thare was no more bot birdis, bank, and
bruke.

In twynkling of ane eye to schip thai went,
And swyth¹³ up saile unto the top thai
stent,¹⁴

And with swift course atour¹⁵ the flude
thay frak;¹⁶

Thay fyrir gunnis wyth powder violent,

Till that the reke¹⁷ raise to the firmament,

The rockis all resownyt wyth the rak,¹⁸

For reird¹⁹ it semyt that the raynbow
brak;

Wyth spreit affrayde apon my fete I
sprent²⁰

Among the clewis,²¹ so carefull was the
crak.

And as I did awake of my suev[n]ing,²²

The joyfull birdis merily did syng

For myrth of Phebus tendir bemes
schene;

Suete war the vapouris, soft the morowing,

Halesum the vale, depaynt wyth flouris ying;

The air attemperit, sobir, and amene;²³

In quhite and rede was all the felde be-
sene,²⁴

Throu Naturis nobil fresche anamalyng,
In mirthfull May, of eviry moneth quene.

O reverend Chaucere, rose of rethoris all,

As in oure tong ane flour imperiall,

That raise in Britane evir, quho redis
rycht,

Thou beris of makaris the tryumph riall;

Thy fresch anamalit termes celicall²⁵

This mater coud illumynit have full
brycht.

Was thou noucht of oure Inglisch all the
lycht,

Surmounting eviry tong terrestriall,²⁶⁰

Alls fer as Mayes morow dois myd-
nycht?

O morall Gower, and Ludgate laureate,

Your sugurit lippis and toungis aureate,

Bene to oure eris cause of grete delyte;

Your angel mouthis most mellifluate

Our rude langage has clere illumynate,

And faire our-gilt oure speche, that im-
perfyte

Stude, or your goldyn pennis schupe²⁶ to
wryte;

This Ile before was bare, and desolate

Off rethorike, or lusty fresch endyte.²⁷⁰

¹³ swiftly. ¹⁴ hoisted. ¹⁵ over. ¹⁶ hastened.

¹⁷ reek, smoke. ¹⁸ noise. ¹⁹ uproar. ²⁰ sprang.

²¹ gorges. ²² dreaming. ²³ agreeable. ²⁴ dressed.

²⁵ celestial. ²⁶ shaped, prepared.

¹ Warily. ² attack. ³ Till.

⁴ powder.

⁵ went astray. ⁶ lost. ⁷ caused.

⁸ deceive.

⁹ strange look. ¹⁰ prepared herself.

¹¹ madness.

¹² hence.

Thou lytill Quair,¹ be evir obedient,
 Humble, subject, and symple of entent,
 Before the face of eviry connyng wicht;
 I knaw quhat thou of rethorike hes spent;
 Off all hir lusty rosis redolent
 Is none in to thy gerland sett on hicht;
 Eschame thar of, and draw the out of
 sicht,
 Rude is thy wede, disteynit, bare, and rent,
 Wele aucht thou be afret² of the licht.

THE THISTLE AND THE ROSE

QUHEN Merche wes with variand windis
 past

And Appryll had, with hir silver schouris,
 Tane leif at Nature with ane orient blast;
 And lusty May, that muddir is of flouris,
 Had maid the birdis to begyn thair houris.⁸
 Amang the tendir odouris reid and quhyt,
 Quhois armony to heir it wes delyt;

In bed at morrow, sleiping as I lay,
 Me thoct Aurora, with hir cristall ene,
 In at the window lukit by the day,¹⁰
 And halsit⁴ me, with visage pail and
 grene;

On quhois hand a lark sang fro the
 splene,⁵

‘Awalk, luvaris, out of your slomering,
 Se how the lusty morrow dois up spring.’

Me thoct fresche May befoir my bed up-
 stude,

In weid depaynt of mony diverss hew,
 Sobir, benyng, and full of mansuetude,⁶
 In brycht attair of flouris forgit new,
 Hevinly of color, quhyt, reid, broun and
 blew,¹⁹

Balmit in dew, and gilt with Phebus bemys,
 Quhill all the housse illumynit of hir lemys.⁷

‘Slugird,’ scho said, ‘awalk⁸ annone for
 schame,

And in my honour sum thing thou go
 wryt;

The lork hes done the mirry day proclame,
 To rais up luvaris with confort and delyt,
 Yit nocht in excessis thy curage to indyt,
 Quhois hairt sum tyme hes glaid and blis-
 full bene,

Sangis to mak undir the levis grene.’

¹ book. ² afraid. ³ prayers. ⁴ greeted. ⁵ from
 the heart, merrily. ⁶ benignity. ⁷ gleams. ⁸ awake.

‘Quhairto,’ quod I, ‘sall I upryss at mor-
 row,

For in this May few birdis herd I sing? ³⁰
 Thai haif moir cause to weip and plane
 thair sorrow,

Thy air it is nocht holsum nor benyng;⁹
 Lord Eolus dois in thy sessone ring;¹⁰
 So busteous¹¹ at the blastis of his horne,
 Amang thy bewis¹² to walk I haif forborne.’

With that this lady sobirly did smyll,
 And said, ‘Upryss, and do thy observ-
 ance;

Thow did promyt, in Mayis lusty quhyle,
 For to diseryve¹³ the Ross of most ple-
 sance.

Go se the birdis how thay sing and dance,
 Illumynit our¹⁴ with orient skyis brycht, ⁴¹
 Annamyllit richely with new asur lycht.’

Quhen this wes said, depairtit scho, this
 quene,

And enterit in a lusty gairding gent;
 And than, methoecht, full bestely besene,¹⁵
 In serk and mantill [after hir] I went
 Into this garth,¹⁶ most dulce¹⁷ and redo-
 lent

Off herb and flour, and tendir plantis sueit,
 And grene levis doing of dew down fleit.¹⁸

The purpoure sone, with tendir bemys reid,
 In orient bricht as angell did appeir, ⁵¹
 Throw goldin skyis putting up his heid,
 Quhois gilt tressis schone so wondir cleir,
 That all the world tuke confort, fer and
 neir,

To luke upone his fresche and blisfull face,
 Doing all sable fro the hevyynnys chace.¹⁹

And as the blisfull sonne of cherarchy²⁰
 The fowlis song throw confort of the
 licht;

The birdis did with oppin vocis cry,
 ‘O, luvaris fo, away thou dully nycht, ⁶⁰
 And welcum day that confortis every
 wicht;

Hail May, hail Flora, hail Aurora schene,
 Hail princes Natur, hail Venus luviss
 quene.’

Dame Nature gaif ane inhibitioun thair
 To ferss Neptunus, and Eolus the bawld,

⁹ benign. ¹⁰ reign. ¹¹ rude. ¹² boughs. ¹³ de-
 scribe. ¹⁴ over. ¹⁵ hastily clad. ¹⁶ yard. ¹⁷ sweet.
¹⁸ leaves swimming with dew. ¹⁹ doing chase = chasing.
²⁰ sound of the hierarchy (of angels).

Nocht to perturb the wattir nor the air,
 And that no schouris, nor blastis cawld,
 Effray suld flouris nor fowlis on the fold;¹
 Scho bad eik Juno, goddis of the sky,
 That scho the hevin suld keip amene² and
 dry. 70

Scho ordand eik that every bird and beist
 Befoir hir hienes suld annone compeir,³
 And every flour of vertew, most and leist,
 And every herb be feild fer and neir,
 As thay had wont in May, fro yeir to
 yeir,
 To hir thair makar to mak obediens,
 Full law inclynnand with all dew reverens.

With that annone scho send the swyft Ro
 To bring in beistis of all condition;
 The restles Snallow commandit scho also
 To feche all fowll of small and greit re-
 nown; 81
 And to gar⁴ flouris compeir⁵ of all fas-
 soun
 Full craftely conjurit scho the Yarrow,
 Quhilk did furth swirk⁶ als swift as ony
 arrow.

All present wer in twynkling of ane e,
 Baith beist, and bird, and flour, befoir the
 quene,
 And first the Lyone, gretast of degre,
 Was callit thair, and he, most fair to
 sene,
 With a full hardy contenance and kene,
 Befoir Dame Natur come, and did inclyne,
 With visage bawld, and curage leonyne. 91

This awfull beist full terrible wes of cheir,
 Persing of luke, and stout of counte-
 nance,
 Rycht strong of corpis, of fassoun fair, but
 feir,⁷

Lusty of schaip, lycht of deliverance,⁸
 Reid of his cullour, as is the ruby glance;
 On feild of gold he stude full mychtely,
 With flour delyeis circulit lustely.⁹

This lady liftit up his cluvis¹⁰ cleir, 99
 And leit him listly¹¹ lene upon hir kne,
 And crownit him with dyademe full deir,
 Off radyous stonis, most ryall for to se;
 Saying, 'The King of Beistis mak I the,

¹ earth. ² pleasant. ³ appear. ⁴ make. ⁵ appear.
⁶ dart. ⁷ without peer. ⁸ motion. ⁹ This is the
 blazoning of the royal arms of Scotland. ¹⁰ claws.
¹¹ pleasantly.

And the cheif protector in woddis and
 schawis;¹²
 Onto thi leigis go furth, and keip the lawis.

'Exerce justice with mercy and conscience,
 And lat no small beist suffir skaith¹³ na
 skornis
 Of greit beistis that bene of moir pis-
 cence;¹⁴
 Do law elyk¹⁵ to aipis and unicornis,
 And lat no bowgle,¹⁶ with his busteous
 hornis, 110
 The meik pluch ox¹⁷ oppress, for all his
 pryd,
 Bot in the yok go peciable him besyd.'

Quhen this was said, with noyis and soun
 of joy,
 All kynd of beistis in to thair degre,
 At onis cryit lawd, 'Vive le Roy!'
 And till his feit fell with humilite,
 And all thay maid him homege and
 fewte;¹⁸
 And he did thame ressaif with princely
 lait,¹⁹
 Quhois noble yre is proceir prostratis.²⁰

Syne crownit scho the Egle King of Fowlis,
 And as steill dertis scherpit scho his pen-
 nis,²¹ 121
 And bawd him be als just to awppis²² and
 owlis,
 As unto pacokkis, papingais,²³ or cren-
 nis,²⁴
 And mak a law for wycht²⁵ fowlis and
 for wrennis;
 And lat no fowll of ravyne do efferay,²⁶
 Nor devoir birdis bot his awin pray.

Than callit scho all flouris that grew on
 feild,
 Discirnyng all thair fassionis and ef-
 feiris,²⁷
 Upone the awfull Thrissill scho beheld,
 And saw him kepit with a busche of
 speiris; 130
 Conceding him so able for the weiris,
 A radius croun of rubeis scho him gaif,
 And said, 'In feild go furth, and fend the
 laif;²⁸

¹² groves. ¹³ harm. ¹⁴ puissance. ¹⁵ alike.
¹⁶ wild ox. ¹⁷ plough ox. ¹⁸ fealty. ¹⁹ gestures.
²⁰ Perhaps "to spare the prostrate," *proceir* for *pro-*
teir, from *protéger*. (Gregor's note.) ²¹ quills.
²² curlews. ²³ parrots. ²⁴ cranes. ²⁵ powerful.
²⁶ affright. ²⁷ qualities. ²⁸ defend the rest.

'And, sen thow art a king, thou be discreit;

Herb without vertew thou hald nocht of sic pryce

As herb of vertew and of odor sueit;

And lat no nettill vyle, and full of vyce,

Hir fallow¹ to the gudly flour delyce;

Nor latt no wyld weid, full of churlicheyness,
Compair hir till the lilleis nobilness. 140

'Nor hald non udir flour in sic denty²

As the fresche Ross, of cullour reid and quhyt;³

For gife thow dois, hurt is thyne honesty,

Conciddering that no flour is so perfyte,

So full of vertew, plesans and delyt,

So full of blisfull angelik bewty,
Imperiall birth, honour and dignite.'

Than to the Ross scho turnyt hir visage,

And said, 'O lusty dochtir most benyng,

Aboif the lilly, illustare of lynnage,⁴ 150

Fro the stok ryell rysing fresche and ying,

But only spot or macull doing spring;⁵

Cum, blowme of joy, with jemis to be cround,
For our the laif⁶ thy bewty is renoun'd.'

A coistly croun, with clarefeid stonis brycht,

This cumly quene did on hir heid incloiss,

Quhill all the land illumynit of the licht;

Quhairfoir me thocht all flouris did reiois,

Crying attonis,⁷ 'Haill, be thou richest
Ross!

Haill, hairbis empryce, haill, freschest
quene of flouris! 160

To the be glory and honour at all houris!'

Thane all the birdis song with voce on
hicht,

Quhois mirthfull soun wes mervelus to
heir;

The mavyss song, 'Haill, Roiss, most riche
and richt,

That dois up flureiss udir Phebus speir;

Haill, plant of yowth, haill, princes doch-
tir deir,

Haill, blosome breking out of the blud roy-
all,

Quhois pretius vertew is imperiall.'

¹ fellow, join herself.

² estimation.

³ An allusion to the union of the houses of York and Lancaster by the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV.

⁴ Hinting at the efforts made to marry James IV to

a French princess.

⁵ Springing without stain.

⁶ over the rest.

⁷ at once.

The merle scho sang, 'Haill, Roiss of most
delyt, 169

Haill, of all flouris quene and soverane;'

The lark scho song, 'Haill, Roiss, both reid
and quhyt,

Most plesand flour, of mighty cullouris
twane;'

The nychtingaill song, 'Haill, Naturis
suffragene,

In bewty, nurtour and every nobilness,

In riche array, renown and gentilness.'

The commoun voce upraiss of birdis small,

Apone this wyss, 'O blissit be the hour

That thow wes chosin to be our principall;

Welcome to be our princes of honour, 179

Our perle, our plesans and our paramour,

Our peax,⁸ our play, our plane felicite,

Chryst the conserf frome all adversite.'

Then all the birdis song with sic a schout,

That I annone awoilk quhair that I lay,

And with a braid⁹ I turnyt me about

To se this court; bot all wer went away:

Than up I lenyt, halfingis in affrey,¹⁰

And thuss I wret, as ye haif hard to for-
row,¹¹

Off lusty May upone the nynt morrow.

LAMENT FOR THE MAKERS¹²

QUHEN HE WES SEIK

I THAT in heill¹³ wes and glaidnes,

Am trublit now with gret seiknes,

And feblit with infirmite;

Timor Mortis conturbat me.¹⁴

Our plesance heir is all vane glory,

This fals warld is bot transitory,

The flesheche is brukle,¹⁵ the Fend is sle;¹⁶

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The stait of man dois change and vary, 9

Now sound, now seik, now blyth, now sary,

Now dansand mirry, now like to dee;

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

No stait in erd¹⁷ heir standis sickir¹⁸

As with the wynd wavis the wickir,¹⁹

[So] wavis this warldis vanite;

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

⁸ peace.

⁹ start.

¹⁰ half in affright.

¹¹ before.

¹² Poets. ¹³ health. ¹⁴ The fear of death troubles me.

¹⁵ frail. ¹⁶ aly. ¹⁷ earth. ¹⁸ secure. ¹⁹ wicker, twig.

Onto the ded ¹ gois all estatis,
 Princis, prelatis, and potestatis,
 Baith riche and pur of all degre;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me. 20

He takis the knychtis in to feild,
 Anarmit under helme and scheild;
 Victour he is at all melle;²
 Timor Mimor conturbat me.

That strang unmercifull tyrand
 Tak[is] on the moderis breist sowkand
 The bab, full of benignite;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He takis the campion in the stour,³
 The capitane closit in the tour, 30
 The lady in bour full of bewte;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He spairis no lord for his piscence,⁴
 Na clerk for his intelligence;
 His awfull strak may no man fei;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Art, magicianis, and astrologgis,
 Rethoris, logicians, and theologgis,
 Thame helpis no conclusionis sle;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me. 40

In medicyne the most practicianis,
 Lechis, surrigianis, and phisicianis,
 Thame self fra ded may not supple;⁵
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

I see that makaris amang the laif⁶
 Playis heir ther pageant, syne gois to
 graif;⁷

Sparit is nocht ther faculte;⁸
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hes done petuously devour,
 The noble Chaucer, of makaris flour, 50
 The Monk of Bery,⁹ and Gower, all thre;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The gude Syr Hew of Eglintoun,
 Etrik,¹⁰ Heryot, et Wyntoun,¹¹
 He hes tane out of this cuntre;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

That scorioun fell hes done infek¹²
 Maister Johne Clerk, and James Afflek,
 Fra balat making and trigide;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me. 60

Holland and Barbour he has berevit;
 Allace! that he nought with us levit
 Schir Mungo Lokert of the Le;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Clerk of Tranent eik he has tane,
 That maid the anteris¹³ of Gawane;
 Schir Gilbert Hay endit has he;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has Blind Hary, and Sandy Traill
 Slaine with his schour of mortall baill, 70
 Quhilk Patrik Johnestoun myght nought
 fle;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hes reft Merseir his endite,¹⁴
 That did in luf so lifly write,
 So schort, so quyk, of sentence hie;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hes tane Roull of Aberdene,
 And gentill Roull of Corstorphin[e];
 Two bettir fallowis did no man se;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me. 80

In Dunfermelyne he has done rounne¹⁵
 With Maister Robert Henrisoun;
 Schir Johne the Ros enbrast¹⁶ hes he;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

And he has now tane, last of aw,¹⁷
 Gud gentill Stobo and Quintyne Schaw,
 Of quham all wichtis hes pete;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Gud Maister Walter Kennedy
 In poynt of dede lyis veraly, 90
 Gret reuth it wer that so suld be;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Sen he has all my brether tane,
 He will naught lat me lif alane,
 On forse I man¹⁸ his nyxt pray be;
 Timor Mortis conturbat me.

¹ death. ² contest. ³ the champion in the battle.

⁴ puissance. ⁵ defend. ⁶ rest. ⁷ grave.

⁸ profession. ⁹ i.e., Lydgate.

¹⁰ So Bannatyne MS.; Maitland MS. *et eik*.

¹¹ For all these poets see the notes to the Scottish Text Soc. edition.

¹² has stricken and withheld.

¹³ writing. ¹⁴ whispered.

¹⁵ all. ¹⁶ must.

¹⁷ adventures.

¹⁸ embraced.

Sen for the deid remeid is non,
Best is that we for dede dispone,¹
Eftir our deid that lif may we;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 100

THE DANCE OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Off Februar the fyftene nycht,
Full lang befor the dayis lycht,
I lay in till a trance;
And then I saw baith Hevin and Hell:
Me thoct, amangis the feyndis fell,
Mahoun² gart cry ane dance
Off schrewis³ that wer nevir schrevin,
Aganiss the feist of Fasternis evin,⁴
To mak thair observance;
He bad gallandis ga graith a gyiss,⁵ 10
And kast up gamountis⁶ in the skyiss,
That last came out of France.

'Lat se,' quod he, 'now quha begynniss?'
With that the fowll Sevin Deidly Synnis
Begowth to leip at anis.
And first of all in dance wes Pryd,
With hair wyld⁷ bak and bonet on syd,
Lyk to mak vaistie wanis;⁸
And round about him, as a quheill,
Hang all in rumpillis to the heill 20
His kethat⁹ for the nanis:¹⁰
Mony prout trumpour¹¹ with him trippit
Throw skaldand fyre, ay as thay skippit
Thay gyrnd¹² with hiddouss granis.¹³

Heilie harlottis on hawtane wyiss¹⁴
Come in with mony sindrie gyiss,¹⁵
Bot yit luche¹⁶ nevir Mahoun;
Quhill¹⁷ preistis come in with bair schevin
nekkis,
Than all the feyndis lewche, and maid
gekkis,¹⁸
Blak Belly and Bawsy Brown.¹⁹ 30

Than Yre come in with sturt²⁰ and stryfe;
His hand wes ay upoun his knyfe,
He brandeist lyk a beir:²¹
Bostaris, braggaris, and barganeris,²²
Eftir him passit in to pairis,
All bodin in feir of weir;²³

¹ dispose. ² Mahomet, i.e., the Devil. ³ rascals.
⁴ the eve of Lent. ⁵ gallants prepare a masquerade.
⁶ gambols. ⁷ combed. ⁸ desolate dwellings. ⁹ cascade.
¹⁰ nonce. ¹¹ deceiver. ¹² snarled. ¹³ costumes.
¹⁴ Proud rascals in haughty fashion. ¹⁵ gown.
¹⁶ laughed. ¹⁷ Till. ¹⁸ mocks. ¹⁹ Two popular devils.
²⁰ trouble. ²¹ swaggered like a bear.
²² quarrellers. ²³ arrayed in the likeness of war.

In jakkis²⁴ and stryppis²⁵ and bonettis of steill,
Thair leggis wer chenyeit²⁶ to the heill,
Ffrawart wes thair affeir:²⁷
Sum upoun udir with brandis beft,²⁸ 40
Sum jaggit²⁹ uthiris to the heft,
With knyvis that scherp coud scheir.

Nixt in the dance followit Invy,
Fild full of feid³⁰ and fellony,
Hid malyce and dispyte;
Ffor pryvie hatrent³¹ that tratour trymlit.
Him followit mony freik³² dissymlit,
With fenyteit wurdis³³ quhyte;

And flattereris in to menis facis,
And bakbyttaris in secreit placis 50
To ley³⁴ that had delyte;
And rownaris of fals lesingis;³⁵
Allace! that courtis of noble kingis
Of thame can nevir be quyte.

Nixt him in dans come Cuvatyce,
Rute of all evill and grund of vyce,
That nevir coud be content;
Catyvis, wrechis, and okkeraris,³⁶
Hud-pykis, hurdaris, and gadderaris³⁷ 60
All with that warlo³⁸ went:

Out of thair throttis thay schot on udder³⁹
Hett molten gold, me thoct a fudder,⁴⁰
As fyreflawcht⁴¹ maist fervent;
Ay as thay tomit⁴² thame of schot,
Ffeyndis fild thame new up to the thrott
With gold of allkin prent.⁴³

Syne Sweirnes,⁴⁴ at the secound bidding,
Come lyk a sow out of a midding,
Full slepy wes his grunye:⁴⁵
Mony sweir bumbard belly huddroun,⁴⁶ 70
Mony slute daw⁴⁷ and slepy duddroun.⁴⁸
Him serwit ay with sounye.⁴⁹

He drew thame furth in till a chenyeie,⁵⁰
And Belliall, with a brydill renyie,⁵¹
Evir lascht thame on the lunye:⁵²

²⁴ corselets. ²⁵ strips. But Bannatyne MS. may be read *scryppis*, bags. Neither is satisfactory.
²⁶ covered with chain-mail. ²⁷ Wild was their behavior. ²⁸ beat. ²⁹ stabbed. ³⁰ feud. ³¹ hatred.
³² person. ³³ words. ³⁴ lie. ³⁵ whisperers of false lies. ³⁶ usurers. ³⁷ Misers, hoarders, and gatherers. ³⁸ vizard. ³⁹ others. ⁴⁰ great quantity (lit. 128 lbs.). ⁴¹ wildfire. ⁴² emptied.
⁴³ all kinds of coinage. ⁴⁴ Sloth. ⁴⁵ visage. ⁴⁶ lazy, tun-bellied sloven (Chalmers). ⁴⁷ idle rogue. ⁴⁸ drab.
⁴⁹ care. ⁵⁰ chain. ⁵¹ rein. ⁵² loin.

In dance thay war so slaw of feit,
Thay gaif thame in the fyre a heit,
And maid thame quicker of counyie.¹

Than Lichery, that lathly corss,
Berand ² lyk a bagit horss,³ 80
And Ydilness did him leid;
Thair wes with him ane ugly sort,⁴
Full mony stynkand fowll tramort,⁵
That had in syñ bene deid.

Than the fowll monstir Glutteny,
Off wame⁶ unsasiable and gredy,
To dance he did him dress.
Him followit mony fowll druncart,
With cau and collep,⁷ cop and quart,
In surfiet and excess;

Full mony a waistless wallydrag,⁸
With wamiss unweildable,⁹ did furth wag,
In creische¹⁰ that did inress; 99
'Drynk!' ay thay cryit, with mony a
gaip,¹¹
The feyndis gaif thame hait leid to laip,¹²
Thair leveray¹³ wes na less.

Na menstrallis playit to thame but dowl;
Ffor glemen thair wer haldin owt,
Be day, and eik hy nycht,
Except a menstrall that slew a man,
Swa till his heretage he wan,
And entirt be brief of richt.

Than cryd Mahoun for a Heleand pad-
yane;¹⁴
Syne ran a feynd to feche Makfadyane, 100
Ffar northwart in a nuke;¹⁵
Be he the correnoch¹⁶ had done schout,
Erschemen¹⁷ so gadderit him abowt,
In Hell grit rowme thay tuke.

Thae tarmegantis,¹⁸ with tag and tatter,
Ffull lowde in Ersche¹⁹ begowth to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke;²⁰
The Devill sa devit²¹ wes with thair yell,
That in the depest pot of Hell
He smorit²² thame with smuke. 120

¹ apprehension. ² snorting, roaring. ³ stallion (?)
Maitland reads *bewkit*, balky. ⁴ lot. ⁵ corpse.
⁶ belly. ⁷ mug. ⁸ sloven. ⁹ huge bellies. ¹⁰ grease.
¹¹ gape. ¹² hot lead to lap. ¹³ livery, reward.
¹⁴ Highland pageant. ¹⁵ nook, corner. ¹⁶ coronach,
dirge. ¹⁷ Ersemen, Gaels from the Highlands.
¹⁸ tarmagants, fiends. ¹⁹ Gaelic. ²⁰ croak like
raven and rook. ²¹ deafened. ²² smothered.

THE PETITION OF THE GRAY
HORSE, OLD DUNBAR

Now lufferis cummis with largess lowd,²³
Quhy sould not palfrays thane be prowd,
Quben gillettis wil be schomd and schroud,²⁴
That ridden ar baith with lord and lawd?²⁵
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!²⁶

Quhen I was young and into ply,²⁷
And wald cast gammaldis²⁸ to the sky,
I had beine bocht in realmes by,²⁹
Had I consentit to be sauld. 10
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

With gentill horss quhen I wald knyp,³⁰
Thane is thair laid on me ane quhip,
To colleveris³¹ than man I skip,
That scabbit ar, hes cruik³² and cald.
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

Thocht in the stall I be nocht clappit,
As coursouris that in silk beine trappit, 20
With ane new hous³³ I wald be happit,
Aganis this Crysthimmes for the cald.
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

Suppois I war ane ald yald aver,³⁴
Schott furth our clewch³⁵ to pull the clever,³⁶
And had the strenthis of all Strenever,
I wald at Youll be housit and stald.
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald,
That I suld be ane Yuillis yald! 30

I am ane auld horss, as ye know,
That evir in duill dois drug³⁷ and draw;
Great court horss puttis me fra the staw,³⁸
To fang the fog be firthe and fald.³⁹
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

I haif run lang furth in the feild,
On pastouris that ar plane and peild;⁴⁰
I mycht be now tein⁴¹ in for eild,⁴²

²³ lovers come with plenteous generosity.
²⁴ fillies will be protected and dressed.
²⁵ lewd, i. e., common.
²⁶ Yule jade, i. e., having nothing new to wear for
Christmas, hence unfortunate, disgraced.
²⁷ in condition. ²⁸ gambols. ²⁹ near. ³⁰ eat grass.
³¹ coal-heavers, or better coal-alvers, colliers' horses.
³² are lame. ³³ housing. ³⁴ spent jade. ³⁵ Thrust
out into the rough ravine. ³⁶ clover. ³⁷ drag.
³⁸ stall. ³⁹ To crop the moss by field and fold.
⁴⁰ stripped. ⁴¹ taken. ⁴² age.

My beikis ar spruning he¹ and bauld. 40
 Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald,
 That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

My mane is turned in to quhyt,
 And thair of ye haff all the wyt!²
 Quhen uthor horss had bran to byt
 I gat bot griss,³ cnype⁴ gif I wald.
 Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
 That I sould be ane Yuillis yald.

I was nevir dautit⁵ into stabell,
 My lyf hes bene so miserable, 50
 My hyd to offer I am abill
 For evill schom strae that I reive wald.⁶
 Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald,
 That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

And yitt, suppois my thrift⁷ be thyne,
 Gif that I die your aucht⁸ within,
 Latt nevir the soutteris⁹ have my skin,
 With ugle gumes to be gnawin.¹⁰
 Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
 That I sould be ane Yuillis yald! 60

The court hes done my curage cuill,¹¹
 And maid me [ane] forriddin muill;¹²
 Yett, to weir trappouris¹³ at this Yuill,
 I wald be spurrit at everie spald.¹⁴
 Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
 That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

RESPONSIO REGIS

Eftir our wrettingis, thesaurer,¹⁵
 Tak in this gray horss, Auld Dunbar,
 Quhilk in my aucht with schervice trew
 In lyart¹⁶ changeit is in hew. 70
 Gar bowss¹⁷ him now aganis this Yuill,
 And busk¹⁸ him lyk ane beschopis muill,
 For with my hand I have indost
 To pay quhat evir his trappouris cost.

THE DREGY OF DUNBAR MADE TO KING JAMES THE FIFTH BEING IN STIRLING

We that ar heir in hevins glory,
 To yow that ar in purgatory,
 Commendis us on our hairty wyiss;
 I mene we folk in parradyis,

¹ My eye-teeth are projecting high. ² blame. ³ grass.
⁴ bite. ⁵ petted. ⁶ ill-kept(?) straw that I would take
 eagerly. ⁷ earnings. ⁸ in your possession. ⁹ shoe-
 makers. ¹⁰ gnawed (for softening and tanning). ¹¹ has
 cooled my spirit. ¹² over-ridden mule. ¹³ trappings.
¹⁴ joint. ¹⁵ treasurer. ¹⁶ To grey. ¹⁷ clothe. ¹⁸ deck.

In Edinburcht with all mirriness,
 To yow of Strivilling in distress,
 Quhair nowdir¹⁹ plesance nor delyt is,
 For pety thus ane Apostill wrytis.
 O! ye heremeitis and hankersaidilis,²⁰
 That takis your pennance at your tablis, 10
 And eitis nocht meit restorative,
 Nor drynkis no wyn confortative,
 Bot aill, and that is thyn and small:
 With few coursis into your hall,
 But²¹ cumpany of lordis and knyghtis,
 Or ony uder²² gudly wichtis,
 Solitar walkand your allone,
 Seing no thing bot stok and stone;
 Out of your panefull purgatory,
 To bring yow to the bliss of glory, 20
 Off Edinburgh the mirry toun
 We sall begyn ane cairfull soun;
 Ane dergy²³ devoit and meik,
 The Lord of bliss doing beseik²⁴
 Yow to delyver out of your noy,²⁵
 And bring yow sone to Edinburgh ioy,
 For to be mirry amang us;
 And sa the dergy begynis thuss.

LECTIO PRIMA

The Fader, the Sone, and Haly Gaist,
 The mirthfull Mary virgene chaist, 30
 Of angellis all the ordouris nyne,
 And all the hevynly court devyne,
 Sone bring yow fra the pyne and wo
 Of Strivilling, every court-manis fo,
 Agane to Edinburghis ioy and bliss,
 Quhair wirshep, welth, and weiflar is,
 Pley, plesance, and eik honesty:
 Say ye amen, for cheritie.

RESPONSIO, TU AUTEM DOMINE

Tak consolatioun in your pane,
 In tribulatioun tak consolatioun, 40
 Out of vexatioun cum hame agane,
 Tak consolatioun in your pane.

JUBE DOMINE BENEDICERE

Oute of distress of Strivilling toun
 To Edinburcht bliss, God mak yow boun.²⁶

LECTIO SECUNDA

Patriarchis, profetis, and appostillis deir,
 Confessouris, virgynis, and marteris cleir,
 And all the saitt²⁷ celestiall,
 Devotely we upoun thame call,

¹⁹ neither. ²⁰ hermits and anchorites. ²¹ Without.
²² other. ²³ dirge. ²⁴ beseeching. ²⁵ annoy, pain.
²⁶ ready. ²⁷ court.

That sone out of your panis fell,
 Ye may in hevin heir with us dwell, 50
 To eit swan, cran, pertrik, and plover,¹
 And every fische that swymis in rever;
 To drynk with us the new fresche wyne,
 That grew upoun the rever of Ryne,
 Ffresche fragrant claretis out of France,
 Of Angerss and of Orliance,
 With mony ane cours of grit dyntie :²
 Say ye amen, for cheritie.

RESPONSORIUM, TU AUTEM DOMINE

God and Sanct Jeill³ heir yow convoy
 Baith sone and weill, God and Sanct Jeill,
 To sonce and seill,⁴ solace and joy, 61
 God and Sanct Geill heir yow convoy.
 Out of Strivilling panis fell,
 In Edinburcht ioy sone mot ye dwell.

LECTIO TERTIA

We pray to all the Sanctis of hevin,
 That ar aboif the sterris sevin,
 Yow to deliver out of your pennance,
 That ye may sone play, sing, and dance
 Heir in to Edinburcht and mak gude cheir,
 Quhair welth and weifair is, but weir;⁵ 70
 And I that dois your panis diseryve⁶
 Thinkis for to vissy⁷ yow belyve
 Nocht in desert with yow to dwell,
 Bot as the angell Sanct Gabriell
 Dois go betwene fra hevinis glory
 To thame that are in purgatory,
 And in thair tribulation
 To gif thame consolatioun,
 And schaw thame quhen thair panis ar past,
 Thay sall till hevin cum at last; 80
 And how nane servis⁸ to haif sweitness
 That nevir taistit bittirness,
 And thairfoir how suld ye considid
 Of Edinburcht bliss, quhen ye cum hiddir,
 Bot gif¹⁰ ye taistit had befor
 Of Strivilling toun the panis soir;
 And thairfoir tak in patience
 Your pennance and your abstinence,
 And ye sal cum, or Yule begyn,
 Into the bliss that we ar in; 90
 Quhilk grant the glorius Trinitie !
 Say ye amen, for cheritie.

RESPONSORIUM

Cum hame and dwell no moir in Strivilling;
 Frome hiddouss hell cum hame and dwell,

¹ partridge and plover. ² daintiness. ³ Giles.
⁴ abundance and happiness. ⁵ without doubt. ⁶ de-
scribe. ⁷ visit. ⁸ soon. ⁹ deserves. ¹⁰ unless.

Quhair fische to sell is non bot spirling;¹¹
 Cum hame and dwell no moir in Strivilling.

Et ne nos inducas in temptationem de
 Strivilling:

Sed libera nos a malo illius.
 Requiem Edinburgi dona eijs, Domine,
 Et lux ipsius luceat eijs. 100
 A porta tristitie de Strivilling,
 Erue, Domine, animas et corpora eorum.
 Credo gustare statim vinum Edinburgi,
 In villa viventium.

Requiescant Edinburgi. Amen.

Domine, exaudi orationem meam,
 Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

OREMUS

Deus qui iustos et corde humiles
 Ex omni eorum tribulatione liberare digna-
 tus es,

Libera famulos tuos apud villam de Stir-
 ling versantes 110

A penis et tristitijs eiusdem,
 Et ad Edinburgi gaudia eos perducas,
 Vt requiescat Strivilling. Amen.

*Heir endis Dunbaris Dergy to the King,
 bydand¹² to lang in Stirling.*

THE BALLAD OF KIND KITTOK

MY Gudame wes a gay wif, bot scho wes
 rycht gend,¹³

Scho duelt furth fer in to France, apon
 Falkland fellis;

Thay callit her Kynd Kittok, quhasa hir
 weill kend;¹⁴

Scho wes like a caldrone cruke¹⁵ cler under
 kellis;¹⁶

Thay threipit¹⁷ that scho deit of thrist, and
 maid a gud end.

Efter hir dede,¹⁸ scho dredit¹⁹ nought in
 hevin for to duell;

And sa to hevin the hieway dreidless scho
 wend,

Yit scho wanderit, and yeid by²⁰ to ane el-
 riche²¹ well.

Scho met thar, as I wene,

Ane ask²² rydand on a snail, 10

And cryit, 'Ourtane²³ fallow, hail !'

And raid ane inche behind the tail,

Till it wes neir evin.

¹¹ sprats. ¹² dwelling. ¹³ genteel. ¹⁴ knew.
¹⁵ pot-hook. ¹⁶ head-dress. ¹⁷ insisted. ¹⁸ death.
¹⁹ doubted. ²⁰ went aside. ²¹ fairy. ²² newt.
²³ Overtaken.

Sa scho had hap to be horsit to hir herbry,¹
 Att ane ailhous neir hevin, it nyghttit²
 thaim thare;
 Scho deit of thrist in this warld, that gert
 hir be so dry,
 Scho never eit, bot drank our mesur³ and
 mair.
 Scho slepit quhill the morne at none, and
 rais airly;
 And to the yettis⁴ of hevin fast can⁵ the wif
 fair,⁶
 And by Sanct Petir, in at the yet, scho
 stall⁷ prevely:²⁰
 God lukit and saw hir lattin in, and lewch⁸
 his hert sair.
 And thar, yeris sevin
 Scho levit a gud life,
 And wes our Ladyis hen wif:
 And held Sanct Petir at stryfe,
 Ay quhill scho wes in hevin.

Sche lukit out on a day, and thought ryght
 lang⁹
 To se the ailhous beside, in till an evill
 hour;
 And out of hevin the hie gait¹⁰ cowth¹¹ the
 wif gang
 For to get hir ane fresche drink; the aill of
 hevin wes sour.³⁰
 Scho come againe to hevinnis yet, quhen
 the bell rang,
 Sanct Petir hat hir with a club, quhill a
 gret clour¹²
 Rais in hir heid, becaus the wif yeid¹³ wrang.
 Than to the ailhous agane scho ran, the
 pycharis¹⁴ to pour,
 And for to brew, and baik.
 Frendis, I pray you hertfully,
 Gif ye be thristy or dry,
 Drink with my Guddame, as ye ga by,
 Anys¹⁵ for my saik.

HOW DUNBAR WAS DESIRED TO BE A FRIAR

THIS nycht befor the dawing¹⁶ cleir,
 Me thoct Sanct Francis did to me appeir,
 With ane religious abbeith¹⁷ in his hand,
 And said, 'In thiss go cleith¹⁸ the, my ser-
 wand;

Refuss the warld, for thow mon¹⁹ be a freir.'

¹ inn. ² night overtook. ³ beyond measure. ⁴ gates.
⁵ did. ⁶ go. ⁷ stole. ⁸ laughed. ⁹ yearned.
¹⁰ high road. ¹¹ did. ¹² lump. ¹³ went. ¹⁴ pitchers.
¹⁵ once. ¹⁶ dawning. ¹⁷ habit. ¹⁸ clothe. ¹⁹ must.

With him and with his abbeith bayth I skar-
 rit,²⁰

Lyk to ane man that with a gaist wes mar-
 rit:²¹

Me thoct on bed he layid it me abone,
 Bot on the flure delyverly²² and sone
 I lap thairfra, and nevir wald cum nar it.

Quoth he, 'Quhy skarris thow with this
 holy weid?'²³

Cleith the thairin, for weir²⁴ it thow most
 neid;

Thow, that hes lang done Venus lawis
 teiche,

Sall now be freir, and in this abbeith preiche;
 Delay it nocht, it mon be done but dreid.²⁴

Quod I, 'Sanct Francis, loving be the till,²⁵
 And thankit mot thow be of thy gude will
 To me, that of thy clayis²⁶ ar so kynd;
 Bot thame to weir it nevir come in my
 mynd;

Sweit Confessour, thow tak it nocht in ill.

'In haly legendis haif I hard allevin,²⁷ ²⁸
 Ma²⁸ sanctis of bishoppis nor freiris, be sic
 sevin;²⁹

Off full few freiris that hes bene sanctis I
 reid;

Quhairfor ga bring to me ane bishopis
 weid,

Gife evir thow wald my saule gaid³⁰ unto
 Hevin.'

'My brethir oft hes maid the supplicationis,
 Be epistillis, sermonis, and relationis,
 To tak the abyte, bot thow did postpone;
 But ony process,³¹ cum on thairfor annone,
 All circumstance put by and excusationis.'

'Gif evir my fortoun wes to be a freir, ³²
 The dait thairof is past full mony a year;
 For into every lusty toun and place
 Off all Yngland, frome Berwick to Kalice,
 I haif in to thy habeth maid gud cheir.

'In freiris weid full fairly haif I fleichit,³²
 In it haif I in pulpet gon and preichit
 In Derntoun kirk, and eik in Canterbury;
 In it I past at Dover our³³ the ferry
 Throw Piccardy, and thair the peple teich-
 it.⁴⁰

²⁰ was frightened. ²¹ scared. ²² actively. ²³ wear.
²⁴ without doubt. ²⁵ praise be to thee. ²⁶ clothes.
²⁷ alleged. ²⁸ More. ²⁹ by a great deal. ³⁰ guide.
³¹ Without any ado. ³² flattered. ³³ over.

'Als lang as I did beir the freiris style,
In me, God wait, wes mony wrink¹ and wyle;
In me wes falset² with every wicht to flatter,
Qubilk mycht be flemit³ with na haly watter;
I wes ay reddy all men to begyle.'

This freir that did Sanct Francis thair appeir,
Ane fieind he wes in liknes of ane freir;
He vaneist away wtih stynk and fyrie smowk;
With him me thoct all the hous-end he towk,
And I awoik as wy⁴ that wes in weir.⁵ 50

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO THE KING

My prince in God gif the guid grace,
Joy, glaidnes, confort, and solace,
Play, pleasance, myrth, and mirrie cheir,
In hansell⁶ of this guid new yeir.

¹ trick. ² falsehood. ³ banished. ⁴ man.
⁵ doubt. ⁶ As a first gift.

God gif to the ane blissed chance,
And of all vertew abundance,
And grace ay for to perseveir,
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

God give the guid prosperitie,
Fair fortoun and felicitie, 10
Evir mair in earth quhill thow ar heir,
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

The heavinlie Lord his help the send,
Thy realme to reull and to defend,
In peace and justice it to steir,
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

God gif the blis quhair evir thow bownes,⁷
And send the many Fraunce crownes,
Hie liberall heart, and handis nocht sweir,⁸
In hansell of this guid new yeir. 20

⁷ goest. ⁸ reluctant.

GAVIN DOUGLAS

TRANSLATION OF THE ÆNEID

(1, Prologue 1-103)

LAUDE, honor, prasingis, thankis infynite
To the, and thi dulce¹ ornate fresche endite,²
Mast reverend Virgill, of Latyne poetis
prince,

Gemme of ingine³ and fluide of eloquence,
Thow peirles perle, patrour of poetrie,
Rois,⁴ register,⁵ palme, laurer, and glory,
Chosin cherbukle,⁶ cheif flour and cedir
tree,

Lanterne, leidsterne,⁷ mirrour, and *a per se*,
Master of masteris, sweet sours and spring-
and well,

Wyde quhar our all⁸ ringis thi hevinle bell:
I mene thi crafty werkis curious, 11
Sa quik, lusty, and mast sentencious,
Plesable, perfyte, and felable in all degre,
As quha the mater held to foir⁹ thar ee;
In every volume quhilk the list do¹⁰ write,
Surmonting for all uther maneir endite,
Lyk as the rois in June with hir sueit smell
The marygulde or dasy doith excell.
Quhy suld I than, with dull forhede and
vane,¹¹

With ruide engine and barrand emptive¹²
brane, 20

With bad harsk¹³ speche and lewit¹⁴ bar-
bour tong,

Presume to write quhar thi sueit bell is
rong,

Or contrefait sa precious wourdis deir ?
Na, na, nocht sua, bot knele quhen I thame
heir.

For quhat compair betuix midday and nycht,
Or quhat compare betuix myrknes¹⁵ and
lycht,

Or quhat compare is betuix blak and quhyte,
Far gretar difference betuix my blunt endyte
And thi scharp sugurat sang Virgiliane,
Sa wyslie wrocht with nevir ane word in
vane; 30

My waverand wit, my cunnyng feble at all,
My mynd mysty, thir ma nocht myss¹⁶ ane
fall.

Stra¹⁷ for this ignorant blabring imperfyte
Beside thi polyte termis redemyte;¹⁸
And no the les with support and correctioun,
For naturall luife and freindfull affectioun,
Quhilkis¹⁹ I beir to thi werkis and endyte,
Althocht, God wait, I know tharin full lyte,
And that thi facund²⁰ sentence mycht be
song

In our langage als weill as Latyne tong — 40
Alswele, na, na, impossible war, per de, ²¹
Yit with your leif, Virgill, to follow the,
I wald into my rurale vulgar gros,
Write sum savoring of thi Eneados.
Bot sair I drede for to distene²² the quyte,
Throu my corruptit cadens imperfyte;
Distene the, na forsuith, that ma I nocht,
Weill ma I schaw my burell busteous²³
thocht;

Bot thi work sall endure in laude and glory,
Bot²⁴ spot or falt, conding²⁵ eterne memory.
Thocht I offend, onhermit²⁶ is thine fame,
Thyne is the thank, and myne sal be the
shame. 52

Quha ma thi versis follow in all degre,
In bewtie, sentence, and in gravite ?
Nane is, nor was, nor yit sal be, trow I,
Had, has, or sal have sic crafte in poetrie.
Of Helicon so drank thou dry the fluid
That of the copiose flowith²⁷ or plenitud
All man²⁸ purches drink at thi sugurat
tone,²⁹

So lamp of day thou art, and shynand mone,
All utheris on force mou²⁸ their lycht beg or
borow. 61

Thou art Vesper, and the day sterne at
morow;

Thou Phebus, lychnar of the planetis all,
I not³⁰ quhat dewlie I the clepe³¹ sall,
For thou art al and sum, quhat nedis moir,
Of Latyne poetis that sens³² wes or befoir.

¹ sweet. ² writing. ³ invention, imagination.
⁴ Rose. ⁵ standard. ⁶ carbuncle. ⁷ lodestar.
⁸ Quite everywhere. ⁹ before. ¹⁰ it pleased thee.
¹¹ empty. ¹² barren, empty. ¹³ harsh. ¹⁴ lewd,
ignorant. ¹⁵ darkness.

¹⁶ there may not fail. ¹⁷ A straw. ¹⁸ ornate.
¹⁹ Which. ²⁰ eloquent. ²¹ *par Dieu*. ²² sully.
²³ uncultivated, rough. ²⁴ Without. ²⁵ deserving.
²⁶ unharmed. ²⁷ abundance. ²⁸ must. ²⁹ tun,
wine-cask. ³⁰ know not. ³¹ call. ³² since.

Of the writis Macrobius, sans fail,
 In his grete volume clepit Saturnail,
 Thi sawis in sic eloquence doith fleit,¹
 So inventive of rhetorik flouris sueit 70
 Thou art, and hes sa hie profound sentence
 Therto perfyte, but ony indigence,
 That na lovingis² ma do incres thi fame,
 Nor na reproche diminew thi guid name.
 But sen I am compellit the to translait,
 And nocht onlie of my curage, God wait,
 Durst interprise sic outrageous foli,
 Quhar I offend, the les repreif serf³ I;
 And at⁴ ye knaw at quahis instance I tuik
 For to translait this mast excellent buik, 80
 I mene Virgilis volume maist excellent,
 Set⁵ this my werk full feble be of rent,⁶
 At the request of ane lorde of renowne,
 Of ancistry noble and illuster barowne,
 Fader of bukis, protectour to science and
 lare,⁷

My speciall gude lord Henry Lord Sanct
 Clair,

Quhilk with grete instance divers tymes seir,⁸
 Prayit me translait Virgill or Omeir;
 Quahis plesour suithlie as I understuid,
 As neir coniunct⁹ to his lordschip in bluid,
 So that me thoct his request ane com-
 mand, 91

Half disparit¹⁰ this wark tuik on hand,
 Nocht fullie grantand, nor anis sayand ye,¹¹
 Bot onelie to assay quhow it mycht be.
 Quha mycht ganesay a lord sa gentle and
 kynd,

That evir hed ony curtasy in thair mynd,
 Quhilk beside his innative¹² policy,
 Humanite, curaige, fredome, and chevalry,
 Bukis to recollect, to reid and se,
 Hes greit delite als evir hed Ptolome ? 100
 Quharfor to his nobilite and estaite,
 Quhat so it be, this buik I dedaicate,
 Writing in the language of Scottis nationioun,
 And thus I mak my protestacioun.

DEATH OF PRIAM

(II, chap. IX)

PERAVENTUR, of Priamus ye wald speir¹³
 How tyde¹⁴ the chance; his fait, gif ye list,
 heir.

Quhen he the cietie saw takin and down bet,¹⁵
 And of his palice brokin every yet,¹⁶

¹ float. ² praising. ³ deserve. ⁴ that. ⁵ Suppose.
⁶ value. ⁷ learning. ⁸ several. ⁹ allied. ¹⁰ in
 despair. ¹¹ once saying "yea." ¹² inborn. ¹³ ask.
¹⁴ betided. ¹⁵ beaten. ¹⁶ gate.

Amyd the secrete closettis eik his fais,¹⁷
 The ald gray¹⁸ all for nocht, to him
 tays¹⁹

His hawbrek quhilk was lang furth of
 usage,²⁰

Set on his shoulderis trymbing than for
 age;

A sword, but help, about him beltis he,
 And ran towart his fais, reddy to de. 10

Amyd the cloiss,²¹ under the hevin all bair,
 Stude thair that tyme a mekle fair altair,
 Neir quhame thar grew a rycht auld laurer
 tree,

Bowand towart the altair a little wee,²²
 That with his schaddow the goddis did our-
 heild.²³

Hecuba thidder, with hir childir, for beild²⁴
 Ran all in vane, and about the altair
 swarmis,

Brasand²⁵ the godlik ymage in thair armis,
 As for the storme dowis²⁶ flockis togidder
 ilkane.²⁷ 19

Bot quhen scho saw how Priamus hes tane
 His armour, so as thoeh he had bene ying:
 'Qubat fulich²⁸ thoct, my wrechit spous
 and king,

Movis ye now sic wapnis for to weild ?

Quhiddir haistis thou ? 'quod scho, 'Of
 na sic beild²⁹

Have we now mister,³⁰ nor yit defendouris
 as ye,

The tyme is nocht ganand³¹ thairto, we se.
 In caice Hector war present heir, my sone,
 He mycht nocht succour Troy, for it is
 wone.

Qubairfoir, I pray ye, sit down and cum
 biddir,

And lat this altair salf³² us all togiddir, 30
 Or than at anis all heir lat us de.³³

Thus said scho, and, with sic sembland³⁴ as
 mycht be,

Him towart hir hes brocht, bot ony threte,³⁵
 And sete the auld down in the haly sete.

But lo ! Polites, ane of Priamus sonniss,
 Quhilk fra the slauchter of Pirrus away
 run is,

Throw wapnis fleing and his enemyis all,
 By lang throwgangis³⁶ and mony voyd hall;
 Woundit he was, and come to seek reskew;
 Ardentlie Pirrus can him fast persew, 40

¹⁷ His foe even in the secret chambers. ¹⁸ old gray
 (man). ¹⁹ takes. ²⁰ out of use. ²¹ courtyard.
²² way. ²³ protect. ²⁴ shelter. ²⁵ Embracing.
²⁶ doves. ²⁷ each one. ²⁸ foolish. ²⁹ protection.
³⁰ need. ³¹ advantageous. ³² save. ³³ appearance
³⁴ without any threat. ³⁵ passages.

With grundin lance at hand so neir furth
strykit,
Almaist he haid him tuichit and arrekit.¹
Qubill² at the last, quhen he is cumin, I
wene,
Befoir his faderis and his moderis ene,³
Smate him down deid, in thair sycht quhar
he stude,
The gaist he yald⁴ with habundance of
blude.

Priamus than, thoct he was half deil⁵ deid,
Mycht nocht contene his ire nor wordis of
feid,⁶

Bot crys furth: 'For that cruell offence,
And outrageous fuile-hardy violence, 50
Gif thair be pietie in the hevin about
Qubilk takis heid to this that thou hes
doun,

The goddis mocht condingly the foryeld,⁷
Eftir thi desert rendring sic ganyeld,⁸
Causit me behald my awine child slane,
allace!

And with his blude flit his faderis face.
Bot he, quham by thou fenys⁹ thiself byget,
Achill, was nocht to Priame sa hart set;
For he, of right and faith eschamit¹⁰ eik,
Quhen that I come him lawlie to beseik, 60
The deid body of Hector rendrit me,
And me convoit hame to my citie.⁷
Thus sayand, the auld waiklie, but force or
dynt,

A dart did cast, quhilk, with a pik,¹¹ can
stynt¹²

On his harnys, and in the scheild did hing,
But ony harme or uthir dammaging.
Quod Pirrus, 'Allwais sen thou sais swa,
To Pilleus sone, my fadir, thou most ga;
Ber him this message, ramember weil thou
tell

Him all my werkis and deidis sa cruell. 70
Schaw Neoptolemus is degenerit clene;
Now sall thou dee.' And with that word,
in tene,¹³

The auld trumbling towart the altair he
drew,

That in the hate blude of his sone, sched
new,

Funderit;¹⁴ and Pirrus grippis him by the
hair

With his left hand, and with the udir¹⁵ all
bair

¹ reached. ² Till. ³ eyes. ⁴ yielded. ⁵ part.
⁶ feud, hostility. ⁷ must punish thee according to thy
deserts. ⁸ recompense. ⁹ by whom thou feignest.
¹⁰ ashamed. ¹¹ peck. ¹² did stop. ¹³ anger.
¹⁴ stumbled. ¹⁵ other.

Drew furth his schynand swerd, quhilk in
his syde

Festynnit,¹⁶ and unto the hiltis did it hyde.

Of Priamus thus was the finale fait;¹⁷
Fortune heir endit his glorius estait. 80

Seand¹⁸ Ilion all birning in firis broun,
And Troyis wallis fall and tumbult doun;
That riall prince, umquhill,¹⁹ our²⁰ Asia,
Apone sa fell²¹ pepill and ralmis²² alsua
Ringit²³ in weltht, now by the coist²⁴ lyis
deid

Bot as ane stok, and of hakkit²⁵ his heid;
A corps, but²⁶ life, renowne, or uthir fame,
Unknawin of ony wycht quhat was his name.

MORNING IN MAY

(Prologue to the Twelfth Book of the Æneid)

DYONEA,²⁷ nycht hyrd, and wach of day,
The starnis chasit of the hevin away,
Dame Cynthea doun rolling in the see,
And Venus lost the bewte of hir e,
Fleand eschamyt²⁸ within Cylenyus²⁹ cave;
Mars onbydrew,³⁰ for all his grundin glave,³¹
Nor frawat³² Saturn, from his mortall
speyr,³³

Durst langar in the firmament appeir,
Bot stall abak yond in his regioun far
Behynd the circulat warld of Jupiter; 10
Nycthemyne,³⁴ affrayit of the lycht,
Went undir covert, for gone was the nycht;
As fresch Aurora, to mychty Tythone spous,
Ischit³⁵ of hir safron bed and evir³⁶ hous,
In crammysin³⁷ cled and granit³⁸ violat,
With sangyne cape, and selvage purpurat,³⁹
Onschot the windois of hir large hall,
Spred all wyth rosys, and full of balm ryall,
And eik the hevinly portis crystallyne
Upwarpis braid,⁴⁰ the warld to illumyn. 20
The twinkling stremowris⁴¹ of the orient
Sched purpoure sprangis⁴² with gold and
asure ment,⁴³

Persand⁴⁴ the sabill barmkyn⁴⁵ nocturnall,
Bet doun the skyis clowdy mantill wall:
Eous the steid, with ruby hamis⁴⁶ reid,
Abuf the seyis⁴⁷ lyftis furth his heid,

¹⁶ Stuck. ¹⁷ fate. ¹⁸ Seeing. ¹⁹ formerly.
²⁰ over. ²¹ many. ²² realms. ²³ Reigned. ²⁴ coast.
²⁵ hacked off. ²⁶ without. ²⁷ Venus (as evening and
morning star). ²⁸ ashamed. ²⁹ Mercury's. ³⁰ with-
drew. ³¹ sharp ground sword. ³² perverse. ³³ deadly
sphere. ³⁴ Nyctimene. See Ovid, *Mets.* ii, 590. ³⁵ Is-
sued. ³⁶ ivory. ³⁷ crimson cloth. ³⁸ deep dyed.
³⁹ purple. ⁴⁰ Opens wide. ⁴¹ streamers. ⁴² rays.
⁴³ mixed. ⁴⁴ Piercing. ⁴⁵ battlement. ⁴⁶ hames
—part of a horse-collar. ⁴⁷ Above the seas.

Of cullour soyr,¹ and sum deill broun as
 berry,
 For to alichtyn and glaid our emyspery,
 The flambe owtrastyng at his neys thyrlis;²
 Sa fast Phaeton wyth the quhip him
 quhirlys,³
 To roll Apollo his faderis goldin chair,
 That schrowdyth all the hevynnis and the
 ayr;
 Qubill⁴ shortly, with the blesand⁴ torch of
 day,
 Abilyeit⁵ in his lemand⁶ fresch array,
 Furth of hys palyce ryall ischytt Phebus,
 Wyth goldin croun and vissage gloryus,
 Crysp⁷ hairis, brycht as chrysolite or to-
 pace,
 For quhais hew mycht nane behald his
 face,
 The fyry sparkis brastyng fra his ene,
 To purge the ayr, and gylt the tendyr
 grene,⁸
 Defundand⁹ from hys sege⁹ etheriall
 Glaid influent aspectis celicall.¹⁰
 Before his regale hie magnificens
 Mysty vapour upspringand, sweit as sens,¹¹
 In smoky soppis¹² of donk dewis wak,¹³
 Moich hailsum stovis ourheidand the slak;¹⁴
 The aureat fanys¹⁵ of hys trone soverane
 With glytrand glans ourspreid the occiane,
 The large fludis lemand all of lycht
 Bot with a blenk¹⁶ of his supernale sycht.¹⁵
 For to behald, it was a gloir to se
 The stabilitt¹⁷ wyndis and the cawmyt¹⁸ see,
 The soft sessoun, the firmament serene,
 The lowne¹⁹ illumynat air, the fyrth amene;²⁰
 The sylver scalit fyschis on the greit²¹
 Ourthwort²² cleir stremis sprynkland²³ for
 the heyt,
 Wyth fynnis schynand broun as synopar,²⁴
 And chyssell²⁵ talis, stowrand²⁶ heyr and
 thar;
 The new cullour alychtnyng all the landis,
 Forgane thir stannyris²⁷ schane the beryall
 strandis,²⁸
 Qubill the reflex of the diurnal bemis
 The bene bonkis²⁹ kest ful of variant glemis,
 And lusty Flora did hir blomis spreid
 Under the feit of Phebus sulyart³⁰ steid;

¹ sorrel. ² nostrils. ³ Till. ⁴ blazing. ⁵ Attired.
⁶ gleaming. ⁷ Curly. ⁸ Pouring. ⁹ seat. ¹⁰ celest-
 tial. ¹¹ incense. ¹² clouds. ¹³ wet. ¹⁴ Moist
 wholesome mists covering the swamp. ¹⁵ The golden
 vanes. ¹⁶ glance. ¹⁷ stilled. ¹⁸ calmed sea. ¹⁹ quiet.
²⁰ woodland pleasant. ²¹ gravel. ²² Athwart.
²³ darting. ²⁴ cinnabar. ²⁵ shaped like chisels.
²⁶ rushing. ²⁷ Opposite these gravelly shores. ²⁸ pleas-
 ant banks. ²⁹ gleaming.

The swarditt soyll enbroud wyth selcouth³⁰
 hewis
 Wod and forest obumbrat³¹ with thar bewis,
 Quhois blissfull branchis, porturat³² on the
 grund,
 With schaddois schene schew rochis ruby-
 cund:
 Towris, turattis, kyrnellis,³³ pynnaclis hie
 Of kirkis, castellis, and ilke fair cite,³⁴
 Stude payntit, every fyall, fane, and stage,³⁴
 Apon the plane grund, by thar awin um-
 brage.
 Of Eolus north blastis havand no dreid,
 The sulze³⁵ spred hyr braid bosum on
 breid,³⁶
 Zephyrus' confortabill inspirioun
 For till ressave law in hyr barm³⁷ adoun;
 The cornis croppis³⁸ and the beris new
 breid³⁹
 Wyth glaidsum garmond revesting the erd;
 So thik the plantis sprang in every pece, ⁷⁹
 The feyldis fereleis⁴⁰ of thar fructuus flece;
 Byssy dame Ceres, and proud Pryapus,
 Rejosyng of the planis plenteus,
 Plenyst⁴¹ sa plesand and maist propirly,
 By nature nurist wondir nobilly.
 On the fertill skyrt lappis of the ground
 Streking⁴² on breid ondyr the cirkill round,
 The variant vestur of the venust vail⁴³
 Schrowdis thescherald fur,⁴⁴ and every fail⁴⁵
 Ourfret with fulyeis⁴⁶ of figuris full divers,
 The spray bysprent with spryngand sproutis
 dispers;⁴⁷
 For callour⁴⁸ humour on the dewy nycht,
 Rendryng⁴⁹ sum place the gers pilis⁵⁰ thar
 hycht
 Als far as catal, the lang symmeris day,
 Had in thar pastur eyt and knyp⁵¹ away;
 And blisfull blossommis in the blomyt yard
 Submittis thar hedis in the yong sonniss
 salfgard;
 Ive levis rank ourspreid the barmkin⁵² wall,
 The bloomyt hawthorn cled his pikis⁵³ all;
 Furth of fresch burgionis the wyne grapis
 ying⁵⁴
 Endlang the treilyeis dyd on twystis hing.
 The lowkyt buttonis⁵⁴ on the gemmyt treis
 Ourspreidand leyvis of naturis tapestreis;

³⁰ strange. ³¹ shaded. ³² portrayed. ³³ crenel-
 ations. ³⁴ pinnacle, vane, and storey. ³⁵ soil.
³⁶ abroad. ³⁷ low in her bosom. ³⁸ tops. ³⁹ barley
 newly sprouted. ⁴⁰ wonder. ⁴¹ Replenished.
⁴² Stretching. ⁴³ pleasant vale. ⁴⁴ new mown furrow.
⁴⁵ turf. ⁴⁶ Adorned with leaves. ⁴⁷ here and there.
⁴⁸ refreshing. ⁴⁹ Restoring. ⁵⁰ grass blades.
⁵¹ cropped. ⁵² rampart. ⁵³ prickles, twigs. ⁵⁴ un-
 opened buds.

Soft gresy verdour eftir balmy schowris
 On curland stalkis smyling to thar flowris;
 Behaldand thame sa mony divers hew,
 Sum pers,¹ sum pail, sum burnet,² and sum
 blew,
 Sum grece,³ sum gowlis,⁴ sum purpour, sum
 sangwane,
 Blanchit or broune, faweh⁵ yallow mony
 ane,
 Sum hevynly cullorit in celestiall gre,⁶ ¹⁰⁹
 Sum wattry hewit as the haw wally see,⁷
 And sum depart⁸ in frekly⁹ red and
 quhyte,
 Sum brycht as gold with aureat levis lyte.
 The dasy dyd on breid¹⁰ hir crownell smail
 And every flour onlappit¹¹ in the daill;
 In battill gyrs burgionys the banwart wyld,¹²
 The clavyr, cateluke,¹³ and the cammamyld;
 The flour delice furth spred his hevynly
 hew,
 Flour dammes,¹⁴ and columby blank¹⁵ and
 blew;
 Seyr¹⁶ downis smail on dent de lion sprang,
 The ying grene blomyt straberry levis
 amang; ¹²⁰
 Gypm gerraffouris¹⁷ thar royn¹⁸ levys un-
 schet,
 Fresche prymros, and the purpour violet;
 The roys knoppis, tetand¹⁹ furth thar heyd,
 Gan chyp,²⁰ and kyth²¹ thar vermel lippis
 red,
 Crysp scarlet levis sum scheddand, baith
 attanis
 Kest fragrant smell amynd from goldin
 granis;
 Hevynly lylleis, with lokerand²² toppis
 quhyte,
 Oppynnit and schew thar creistis redy-
 myte,²³
 The balmy vapour from thar sylkyn crop-
 pis ¹²⁹
 Distylland bailsum sugurat hunny droppis,
 And sylver schakaris²⁴ gan fra levis hyng,
 Wyth crystal sprayngis²⁵ on the verdour
 ying;
 The plane pulderyt²⁶ with semely settis²⁷
 sound,
 Bedyt²⁸ full of dewy peirlis round,

¹ blue. ² brown. ³ gray. ⁴ red. ⁵ dun.
⁶ degree. ⁷ wan wavy sea. ⁸ divided. ⁹ speckled.
¹⁰ spread abroad. ¹¹ opened. ¹² In rich rank grass
 burgeous the banewort wild. ¹³ the clover, bird's foot.
¹⁴ Damask rose. ¹⁵ columbine, white. ¹⁶ Many.
¹⁷ Pretty gilly-flowers. ¹⁸ vermilion. ¹⁹ rosebuds
 peeping. ²⁰ burst. ²¹ show. ²² curling. ²³ ornate.
²⁴ dew-drops. ²⁵ sprays. ²⁶ powdered. ²⁷ shoots.
²⁸ Moistened.

So that ilk burgiou, syon,²⁹ herb, and flour,
 Wolx all enbalmyt of the fresch liquour,
 And bathit bait³⁰ did in dulce humouris
 fleit,³¹

Quharof the beis wrocht thar hunny sweet,
 By mighty Phebus operatiounis
 In sappy subtell exalatiounis. ¹⁴⁰
 Forgae³² the cummy of this prince potent,
 Redolent odour up from rutis spreit,³³
 Hailsum of smell as ony spicery,
 Tryakle,³⁴ droggis, or electuary,
 Seroppis, sewane,³⁵ sugour, and synamome,
 Precyus inunctment, salve, or fragrant
 pome,³⁶

Aromatic gummis, or ony fyne potioun,
 Must,³⁷ myr, aloes, or confection;
 Ane paradise it semyt to draw neyr
 Thyr galyart³⁸ gardyngis and ilke greyn
 herbere.³⁹ ¹⁵⁰

Maist amyabill walxis the amerant medis:⁴⁰
 Swannys swonchis⁴¹ throw out the ryp⁴²
 and redis,

Our al thir lowys⁴³ and the fludis gray
 Seyrsaud by kynd⁴⁴ a place quhar thai suld
 lay:

Phebus red fowle hys corall creist can
 steyr,⁴⁵

Oft streking⁴⁶ furth hys hekkyl,⁴⁷ crawand
 cleir,

Amyd the wortis⁴⁸ and the rutys gent
 Pykland⁴⁹ his meyt in alleis quhar he went,
 Hys wifis, Toppa and Pertelok, hym by,
 As byrd al tyme that hantis⁵⁰ bygamy: ¹⁶⁰
 The paynit pounne,⁵¹ pasand with plomys
 gym,⁵²

Kest up his taill, a proud plesand quheil
 rym,⁵³

Yschrowdryt in hys fedramme⁵⁴ brycht and
 schene,

Schapand⁵⁵ the prent of Argus hundreth
 ene:

Amang the brounis⁵⁶ of the olyve twestis⁵⁷
 Seyr⁵⁸ small fowlis wirkand crafty nestis,
 Endlang the hedgeis thyk, and on rank
 akis,⁵⁹

Ilk byrd rejosyng with thar myrthfull
 makis.⁶⁰

²⁹ scion. ³⁰ warm. ³¹ float. ³² Against. ³³ sprang.
³⁴ Medicinal syrup. ³⁵ savin, a drug made from a
 variety of juniper. ³⁶ scent-ball. ³⁷ Musk. ³⁸ gay.
³⁹ garden or arbour. ⁴⁰ emerald meads. ⁴¹ rustle.
⁴² bulrushes. ⁴³ lakes. ⁴⁴ Seeking by nature.
⁴⁵ raise. ⁴⁶ stretching. ⁴⁷ long shining feathers on a
 cock's neck. ⁴⁸ herbs. ⁴⁹ Pecking. ⁵⁰ practises.
⁵¹ peacock. ⁵² neat. ⁵³ wheel-rim. ⁵⁴ Covered
 with his plumage. ⁵⁵ Showing. ⁵⁶ branches. ⁵⁷ twigs.
⁵⁸ Many. ⁵⁹ oaks. ⁶⁰ mates.

In corneris and cleir fenystaris¹ of glas
Full byssely Arague wevand was, ¹⁷⁰
To knit hyr nettis and hir wobbys sle,²
Tharwith to caucht the myghe and littill
fle:³

So dusty puldyr upstowris⁴ in every streyt,
Quhill corby⁵ gaspyt for the fervent heyt.
Under the bewys beyn⁶ in lusty valis,
Within fermans⁷ and parkis cloys of palyis,
The bustnus bukkis rakis⁸ furth on raw;
Heyrdis of hertis throw the thyk wod
schaw,

Baith the broketteis,⁹ and with brayd burn-
yst tyndis;¹⁰

The sprutlyt¹¹ calvys sowkand the reid
hyndis, ¹⁸⁰

The yong fownis followand the dun dayis,¹²
Kyddis skippand throw ronnis¹³ eftir rayis.¹⁴
In lyssouris¹⁵ and on leys¹⁶ littill lammis
Full tait and trig¹⁷ socht bletand to thar
dammis.

Tydy ky lowys,¹⁸ veilyis¹⁹ by thame rynnis;
All snog and slekyt worth²⁰ thir bestis
skynnis.

On salt stremis wolx²¹ Doryda and Thetis,
By rynnand strandis Nymphis and Naedes,
Syk²² as we clepe wenchis and damy-
sellis, ¹⁸⁹

In gresy gravis²³ wandrand by spring wellis,
Of blomyt branchis and flowris quhite and
rede

Plettand thar lusty chaiplettis for thar hede;
Sum sing sangis, dansis ledys,²⁴ and roun-
dis,²⁵

Wyth vocis schill,²⁶ quhill all the dail re-
soundis;

Quharso thai walk into thar caraling,
For amorus lays doith all the rochis ryng.
Ane sang, 'The schip salis our the salt
fame,

Will bring thir merchandis and my lemman
hame;'

Sum other singis, 'I wil be blyth and
lycht,

Myne hart is lent apon sa gudly wycht.'²⁰⁰
And thoctfull luffaris rowmys to and fro,
To leis²⁷ thar pane, and plene²⁸ thar joly
wo,

¹ windows. ² subtle webs. ³ midge and little fly.
⁴ arises. ⁵ Till the crow. ⁶ beauteous boughs.
⁷ enclosures. ⁸ bold bucks range. ⁹ two-year-old
red-deer. ¹⁰ prongs. ¹¹ speckled. ¹² does.
¹³ thickets. ¹⁴ roes. ¹⁵ pastures. ¹⁶ meadows, leas.
¹⁷ sportive and active. ¹⁸ Fat kine low. ¹⁹ calves.
²⁰ are. ²¹ waxed, appeared. ²² Such. ²³ groves.
²⁴ lead. ²⁵ round dances, carols. ²⁶ clear. ²⁷ lose.
²⁸ complain.

Eftyr thar gys,²⁹ now singand, now in sorow,
With hartis pensyve, the lang symmeris
morow.

Sum ballettis lyst endyte of his lady,
Sum levis in hoip, and sum al utterly
Disparyt is, and sa quyte owt of grace,
His purgatory he fyndis in every place.
To pleis his luife sum thoct to flat and
fene,³⁰

Sum to hant,³¹ bawdry and onlesum mene;³²
Sum rownys³³ to hys fallow, thame betwene,
Hys mery stouth³⁴ and pastans³⁵ lait yistrene.
Smyland sayis ane, 'I couth in previte
Schaw the a bowrd.'³⁶ 'Ha, quhat be
that?' quod he.

'Quhat thing?—That moste be secret,'
sayd the other.

'Gude Lord! mysbeleif ye your verray
brother?'

'Na, nevyr a deill, bot harkis quhat I wald;
Thou mon be prevy.' 'Lo, my hand up-
hald!'

'Than sal thou walk at evin.' Quod he,
'Quhiddyr?'

'In sik a place heyr west, we bayth to-
giddyr, ²²⁰

Quhar scho so freschly sang this hyndir³⁷
nycht;

Do chois the ane and I sal quynch the
lycht.'

'I sal be thar I hope,' quod he, and lewch;³⁸
'Ya, now I knaw the mater weill enewch.'

Thus oft dywulgat³⁹ is this schamefull play,
Na thyng according to our hailsum May,
Bot rathyr contagiis and infective,
And repugnant that sessoun nutrytive,
Quhen new curage kytlis⁴⁰ all gentill hartis,
Seand throu kynd ilk thyng springis and
revertis. ²³⁰

Dame Naturis menstrualis, on that other
part,

Thayr blyssfull bay⁴¹ entonyng every art,
To beyt thar amouris of thar nychtis
bail,⁴²

The merll, the mavys, and the nychtingale
With mery notis myrthfully furth brest,
Enforsing thame quha mycht do clynk it⁴³
best.

The cowschet crowdis and pirkis on the rys,⁴⁴
The styrling changis divers stevynnyis nys;⁴⁵

²⁹ guise, fashion. ³⁰ flatter and feign. ³¹ practise.
³² unlawful means. ³³ whispers. ³⁴ stolen pleasures.
³⁵ pastime. ³⁶ jest. ³⁷ last. ³⁸ laughed. ³⁹ pub-
lished. ⁴⁰ tickles. ⁴¹ chorus. ⁴² To rid their loves of
the night's tedium. ⁴³ make it ring. ⁴⁴ The ring-dove
(cushat) coos and perches on the twig. ⁴⁵ delicate notes.

The sparrow chyrmis¹ in the wallis clyft;
Goldspynk and lyntquhyte fordynnand the
lyft;²

The guko galis,³ and so quytteris⁴ the
quaill,

Quhill ryveris rerdyt,⁵ schawis, and every
vaill,

And tender twystis trymlyt on the treis,
For byrdis sang and bemyng⁶ of the beis.

In wrablis⁷ dulce of hevyly armonyis

The larkis, lowd releschand⁸ in the skyis,

Lovys thar lege⁹ with tonys curyus,

Baith to Dame Natur and the fresch Venus

Redryng hie lawdis in thar observance,

Quhais suguryt throtis mayd glayd hartis
dans,

And al small fowlys singis on the spray:

'Welcum, the lord of lycht and lamp of day,

Welcum, fostyr¹⁰ of tendir herbys grene,

Welcum, quyknar of florist flowris schene,

Welcum, support of euery rute and vane!¹¹

Welcum, confort of alkynd fruyt and grane!

Welcum, the byrdis beylde¹² apon the
breyr!

Welcum, maister and rewlar of the yeir!

Welcum, weilfar of husbandis at the
plewis!

Welcum, reparar of woddis, treis, and
bewis;

Welcum, depayntar of the blomyt medis!

Welcum, the lyfe of euery thing that spredis!

Welcum, stourour¹³ of alkynd bestiall!

Welcum be thi brycht bemys, glading all!

Welcum celestially myrrour and aspy,

Attechyng¹⁴ all that hantis sluggardy!

And with this word, in chalmer quhair I lay,

The nynt morow of fresche temperat May,

On fut I sprent¹⁵ into my bayr sark,¹⁶

Wilful for till compleyt my langsum wark

Twichand¹⁷ the lattyr buke of Dan Virgill,

Quhilk me had tareyt al to lang a quhile,

And to behald the cummyng of this kyng,¹⁸

That was sa welcum tyll all warldly thyng,

With sic tryumphe and pompos curage glayd

Than of his souerane chymmis,¹⁹ as is sayd,

Newly arissyn in hys estayt ryall,

That, by hys hew, but orleger²⁰ or dyall,

I knew it was past four hours of day,

And thoct I wald na langar ly in May

280

¹ chirps. ² making the air resound. ³ cuckoo

calls. ⁴ twitters. ⁵ resounded. ⁶ din. ⁷ warbles.

⁸ releasing (their voices). ⁹ Praise their liege lord.

¹⁰ fosterer. ¹¹ vein, pore. ¹² shelter. ¹³ stirrer.

¹⁴ Reproving. ¹⁵ sprang. ¹⁶ shirt. ¹⁷ Touching.

¹⁸ the sun. ¹⁹ mansions. ²⁰ without one to call

the hours.

Les Phebus suld me losanger attaynt:²¹
For Progne had, or than, sung hyr com-
playnt,

And eik hir dreidful systir Philomene

Hir lais endit, and in woddis grene

Hyd hir selvin, eschamyt of hyr chance;

And Esacus²² completis his pennance

In riveris, fludis, and on every laik;

And Peristera²³ byddis luffaris awaik;

'Do serve my lady Venus heyr with me!

Lern thus to mak your observance,' quod

she,

290

'Into myne hartis ladeis sweet presens

Behaldis how I beinge,²⁴ and do reverens.'

Hir nek scho wrinkliss, trasing mony fold,

With plomis glitterand, asur apon guld,

Rending a cullour betwix grene and blew

In purpour glans of bevinly variant hew;

I meyn our awin native bird, gentill dow,²⁵

Syngand in hyr kynd 'I come hider to

wow;'

So prykyng hyr grene curage for to crowd²⁶

In amorus voce and wowar soundis lowd,

That, for the dynning of hir wanton cry,³⁰¹

I irkyt of my bed and myecht nocht ly,

Bot gan me blys,²⁷ syne in my wedis dres,

And, for it was ayr morow, or tyme of mes,²⁸

I hynt a scriptour²⁹ and my pen furth tuike.

Syne thus begouth of Virgill the twelt

buike.

KING HART³⁰

(ll. 1-80)

KING HART in to his cumlie castell strang,

Closit about with craft and meikill ure,³¹

So semlie wes he set his folk amang,

That he no dout had of misaventure;

So prouddie wes he polist, plane, and pure,

With youthheid and his lustie levis grene;

So fair, so fresche, so liklie to endure,

And als so blyth as bird in symmer schene.

For wes he never yit with schouris schot,

Nor yit ourrun with rouk³² or ony rayne; ¹⁰

In all his lusty lecam³³ nocht ane spot;

Na never had experience into payne,

²¹ call me sluggard.

²² Aesacus, son of Priam, changed into a bird, the

diver, after having caused the death of his wife.

²³ dove. ²⁴ bow. ²⁵ dove. ²⁶ coo. ²⁷ cross.

²⁸ early morn, ere time of mass.

²⁹ seized a writing-case.

³⁰ The text is based on the Maitland MS. as printed

by Gregory Smith in *Specimens of Middle Scots*.

³¹ work. ³² mist. ³³ body.

Bot alway into lyking,¹ nocht to layne;²
 Onlie to love and verrie gentilles
 He wes inclynit cleinlie to remane,
 And wonn³ under the wyng of wantownnes.

Yit was this wourthy wicht King under
 warde,
 For wes he nocht at fredome utterlie.
 Nature had lymmit⁴ folk for thair re-
 warde
 This godlie king to governe and to gy;⁵ 20
 For so thai kest⁶ thair tyme to occupy
 In welthis for to wyne; for thai him teichtit
 All lustis for to lane⁷ and underly;⁸
 So prevelie thai preis him and him prei-
 cheid.

First Strenth, (. . .) Lust, and Wantown-
 nes,
 Grein Lust, Disport, Jelousy, and Invy;
 Freschnes, Newgot,⁹ Waistgude,¹⁰ and Wil-
 fulnes,
 Delyvernes, Fulehardenes thairby;
 Gentrice, Fredome,¹¹ Price, Previe Espy,
 Wantwyte, Vanegloir, Prodigalitye, 30
 Unrest, Nichtwalk, and felloun Glutony,
 Unricht, Dyme Sicht, with Slicht and Sub-
 tilitie.

Thir war the inwarde ythand¹² servitouris,
 Quhilk governouris war to this nobil king,
 And kept him inclynit to thair curis;
 Se wes thair nocht in erde that ever nicht
 bring
 Ane of thir folk away fra his duelling.
 Thus to thair terme thay serve for thair
 rewarde,¹³
 Dansing, disport, singing, revelling,
 With bissines all blyth to pleis the lairde. 40

Thir folk, with all the femell¹⁴ thai nicht
 fang,
 Quhilk nummerit ane milyon and weill mo,
 That wer upbred as servitouris of lang,¹⁵
 And with this king wald wonn¹⁶ in weill and
 wo,
 For favour nor for feid¹⁷ wald found¹⁸ him
 fro
 Unto the tyme thair dait be run and past:

¹ pleasure. ² not to lie, i.e., to tell the truth.
³ dwell. ⁴ appointed. ⁵ guide. ⁶ planned.
⁷ hide. So G. Smith from Maitland MS. Pinkerton
 reads *love* = love; *Small love*, and explains as "subject
 to." a doubtful gloss. ⁸ experience. ⁹ New Fashion.
¹⁰ Prodigious. ¹¹ Generosity. ¹² diligent. ¹³ in-
 terests. ¹⁴ family. ¹⁵ for a long time. ¹⁶ dwell.
¹⁷ hostility. ¹⁸ go.

That gold nor gude nicht gar thame fro
 him go,
 No greif nor grame¹⁹ suld grayth²⁰ thame
 so agast.

Fyve servitouris this king he had without,
 That teicht war ay tressoun to espy; 50
 Thai watchit ay the wallis round about
 For innemeis that of hapning ay come by:
 Ane for the day, quhilk jugeit certainly,
 With cure to ken the colour of all hew;
 Ane for the nicht, that harknit bisseily
 Out of quhat airt²¹ that ever the wyndis
 blew.

Syne²² wes thair ane to taist all nutriment
 That to this king wes servit at the deiss;
 Ane uther wes all foveillis²³ for to sent,²⁴
 Of licour or of ony lustie meiss; 60
 The fyft thair wes quhilk culd all [ken]²⁵
 but leiss,²⁶
 The heit, the cauld, the hard, and eik the
 soft —
 Ane ganand²⁷ servand bayth for weir and
 pece;
 Yit hes thir folk thair king betrasit²⁸ oft.

Honour persewit to the kingis yet; 29
 Thir folk said all thai wald nocht lat him
 in,
 Becaus thai said thair lord to feist wes
 set,
 With all his lustie servandis more and
 myn; 30
 Bot he ane port had enterit with ane
 gyn,³¹
 And up he can in haist to the grit toure, 70
 And said he suld it parall³² all with fyn
 And fresche delyt, with mony florist floure.

So strang this king him thoct his castell
 stude,
 With mony towre and turat crownit hie:
 About the wall thair ran ane water woid,³³
 Blak, stinkand, sowr, and salt as is the
 sey,
 That on the wallis whiskit,³⁴ gre be gre,³⁵
 Boldning³⁶ to ryis the castell to confound;
 Bot thai within maid sa grit melody,
 That for thair reird³⁷ thay nicht nocht heir
 the sound. 80

¹⁹ anger, sorrow. ²⁰ make. ²¹ direction. ²² Then.
²³ provisions. ²⁴ smell. ²⁵ know. ²⁶ without lies.
²⁷ profitable. ²⁸ betrayed. ²⁹ gate. ³⁰ greater and
 less. ³¹ trick. ³² decorate. ³³ wild. ³⁴ splashed.
³⁵ step. ³⁶ Swelling. ³⁷ noise.

HONOUR¹

O HIE honour, sweit hevinlie flour de-
gest,²
Gem verteous, maist precious, gudliest.
For hie renoun thou art guerdoun con-
ding,³
Of worschip kend⁴ the glorious end and
rest,
But⁵ quhome in richt na worthie wicht may
lest.
Thy greit puissance may maist avance
all thing,
And poverall to mekill availl⁶ sone
bring.
I the require sen thou but peir⁷ art best,
That efter this in thy hie blis we ring.⁸
Of grace thy face in everie place sa schy-
nis,¹⁰
That sweit all spreit baith heid and feit
inclynis,⁹
Thy gloir afair for till imploir remeid.¹⁰

¹ This "ballade in commendation of honour and ver-
teu" ends "The Palace of Honour," and with its inter-
nal rhymes is a good example of the virtuosity in metre
of the Middle Scots poets.

² sober. ³ condign. ⁴ acknowledged. ⁵ With-
out. ⁶ poor folk to great consequence. ⁷ without
equal. ⁸ reign. ⁹ That sweet (sight) inclines all
aspirit (i. e., everybody) with both head and feet.

¹⁰ advancement.

He docht¹¹ richt nocht, quhilk out of thoct
the tynis;¹²
Thy name but blame, and royal fame di-
vine is;
Thow port, at schort,¹³ of our comfort
and reid¹⁴
Till bring all thing till glaiding efter deid,
All wicht but sicht of thy greit nicht ay
crynis,¹⁵
O schene,¹⁶ I mene¹⁷ nane may sustene
thy feid.¹⁸

Haill rois maist chois till clois¹⁹ thy fois
greit nicht,
Haill, ston quhilk schone upon the throne
of licht,²⁰
Vertew, quhais trew sweit dew ouir-
threw al vice,
Was ay ilk day gar²⁰ say the way of licht;
Amend, offend,²¹ and send our end ay richt.
Thou stant, ordant as sanct, of grant
maist wise,
Till be supplie,²² and the hie gre²³ of price.
Delite the tite me quite of site to dicht,²⁴
For I apply schortlie to thy devise.²⁵

¹¹ avails. ¹² loses. ¹³ in short. ¹⁴ counsel.
¹⁵ shrivels. ¹⁶ shining one. ¹⁷ mean. ¹⁸ enmity.
¹⁹ end. ²⁰ causing (sense dubious). ²¹ Cause us
pleasure, or pain. ²² to be succour. ²³ reward.
²⁴ Be pleased quickly to make me quit of shame.
²⁵ In brief I put myself in thy control.

SIR DAVID LYNDESAY

THE DREAM (ll. 918-1036)

COMPLAYNT OF THE COMMOUNWEILL OF SCOTLAND ¹

AND thus as we wer talking, to and fro,
We saw a bousteous berne ² cum ouir the bent, ³

Bot ⁴ hors, on fute, als fast as he mycht go,
Quhose rayment wes all raggit, revin,
and rent,

With visage leyne, as he had fastit Lent:
And fordwart fast his wayis he did advance,
With ane rycht melancolious countynance,

With scrip on hip, and pykistaff in his hand,

As he had purposit to passe fra hame.
Quod I, 'Gude-man, I wald faine under-stand, ¹⁰

Geve that ye plesit, to wyt quhat were your name?'

Quod he, 'My Sonne, of that I think gret schame,

Bot, sen thow wald of my name have ane feill, ⁵

Forsuith, thay call me John the Commounweill.'

'Schir Commounweill, quho hes yow so disgysit?'

Quod I: 'or quhat makis yow so miserbyll?

I have marvell to se yow so supprysit, ⁶
The quhilk that I have sene so honorabyll.

To all the world ye have bene profitabyll,

And weill honourit in everilk natioun: ²⁰
How happinnis now your tribulation?'

'Allace!' quod he, 'thow seis how it dois stand

With me, and quhow I am disherisit ⁷

¹ This is near the end of the poem, and follows a description of Scotland by the dreamer's guide, Dame Remembrance. ² rough fellow. ³ field. ⁴ Without. ⁵ knowledge. ⁶ oppressed. ⁷ disinherited.

Of all my grace, and mon pass of ⁸ Scotland,

And go, afore quhare I was cherisit.
Remane I heir, I am bot perysit;
For thare is few to me that takis tent, ⁹
That garris ¹⁰ me go so raggit, revin, and rent:

'My tender friendis are all put to the flycht;

For policye is fled agane in France. ¹¹ ³⁰
My syster, Justice, almaist haith tynt ¹² hir sycht,

That scho can nocht hald evinly the balance.

Plane Wrang is plane capitane of ordinance,

The quihilk debarris laute ¹³ and reasoun;
And small remeid is found for open treasoun.

'In-to the South, allace! I was neir slane;
Quier all the land I culd fynd no releif.

Almoist betuix the Mers and Lowmabane ¹⁴

I culde nocht knaw ane leill man be ane theif.

To schaw thair reif, ¹⁵ thift, murthour,
and mischeif, ⁴⁰

And vicious workis, it wald infect the air,

And als langsum to me for tyll declair.

'In-to the Hieland I could fynd no remeid,

Bot suddantlie I wes put to exile:
Thai sweir swynggeoris ¹⁶ thay tuke of me non heid,

Nor amangs thame lat me remane ane quhye.

Als, in the Oute Ylis, and in Argyle,
Unthrift, sweirnes, falset, povertie, and stryfe

Pat Policye in dainger of hir lyfe.

⁸ must pass out of. ⁹ heed. ¹⁰ makes.
¹¹ An allusion to the defeat of the French party.
¹² lost. ¹³ loyalty. ¹⁴ i.e., in the whole Lowland.
¹⁵ robbery. ¹⁶ Those lazy rogues.

'In the Lawland I come to seik refuge, 50
And purposit thare to mak my resi-
dence;

Bot singulare profeit¹ gart me sounne dis-
luge,

And did me gret injuries and offence,
And said to me, "Swyith, harlote,² hy
thee hence,

And in this countre see thow tak no curis,³
So lang as my auctoritie induris."

'And now I may mak no langer debait;

Nor I wate nocht quhome to I suld me
mene;⁴

For I have socht throw all the Spirituall
stait,

Quhilkis tuke na compt for to heir me
complene. 60

Their officiaris, thay held me at disdene;
For Symonie, he rewlis up all that rowte;
And Covatyce, that carle, gart⁵ bar me oute.

'Pryde haith chaist far frome thame Hu-
militie;

Devotioun is fled unto the Freris;
Sensuale plesour hes baneist Chaistitie;
Lordis of religioun, thay go lyke secu-
leris,

Taking more compt in tellyng thair den-
eris⁶

Nor thai do of thair constitutioun.
Thus are thay blyndit be ambitioun. 70

'Our gentyll men are all degenerat;

Liberalitie and lawte boith ar lost,
And Cowardyce with lordis is laureat,
And knyghtlie Curage turnit in brag and
boast.

The civele weir misgydis everilk oist;⁷
Thare is nocht ellis bot ilk man for hym-
self;

That garris me go, thus baneist lyke ane elf.

'Tharefor, adew: I may no langer tarye.'

'Fair weill,' quod I, 'and with sanct
Jhone to borrow!'⁸

Bot, wyt ye weill, my hart was wounder
sarye 80

Quhen Comounweill so sopit⁹ was in sor-
row.

'Yit efter the nycht cumis the glaid mor-
row;

Quharefor, I pray yow, schaw me in cer-
tane

Quhen that ye purpose for to cum agane.'

'That questioun, it sall be sone decydit,'

Quod he, 'thare sall na Scot have con-
fortyng

Of me tyll that I see the countre gydit
Be wysdome of ane gude auld prudent
Kyng,

Quhilk sall delyte him maist, abone¹⁰ all
thyng,

To put Justice tyll executioun, 90
And on strang traitouris mak punitioun.

'Als yit to thee I say ane uther thyng:

I see rycht weill that proverbe is full
trew,

"Wo to the realme that hes ouer young ane
King!"

With that he turnit his bak, and said
adew.

Ouer firth and fell¹¹ rycht fast fra me he
flew,

Quhose departyng to me was displesand.
With that, Remembrance tuk me be the
hand,

And sone, me-thocht, scho brocht me to the
roche 99

And to the cove¹² quhare I began to sleip.
With that, one schip did spedalye approche,

Full plesandlie saling apone the deip,
And syne¹³ did slake hir salis and gan to
creip

Toward the land, anent¹⁴ quhare that I lay.
Bot, wyt ye weill, I gat ane fellown fray:¹⁵

All hir cannounis sche leit craik of at onis:

Down schuke the stremaris frome the top-
castell;

Thay sparit nocht the poulder nor the
stonis;¹⁶

Thay schot thair boltis, and down thair
ankeris fell;

The marenaris, thay did so youte¹⁷ and
yell, 110

That haistalie I stert out of my dreme,
Half in ane fray,¹⁸ and spedalie past hame.

And lychtlie dynit, with lyste¹⁹ and appetyte,
Syne efter past in-tyll ane oratore,

¹ individual interest. ² In haste, fellow. ³ offices.
⁴ complain, moan. ⁵ caused to. ⁶ money. ⁷ host.
for your surety. ⁸ steeped.

¹⁰ above. ¹¹ wood and hill. ¹² cavern. ¹³ presently.
¹⁴ near. ¹⁵ a wicked fright. ¹⁶ stone bullets.
¹⁷ shout. ¹⁸ fright. ¹⁹ pleasure.

And tuke my pen, and thare began to wryte
All the visoun that I have schawin
afore.

Schir, of my dreme as now thou gettis
no more,
Bot I beseik God for to send thee grace
To rewle thy realme in unitie and peace.

THE TESTAMENT AND COMPLAINT OF OUR SOVEREIGN LORD'S PAPINGO

(ll. 626-1190)

Adew, Edinburgh! thou heych triumph-
ant toun,
Within quhose boundis rycht blythfull
have I bene,
Of trew merchandis the rute of this re-
gioun,
Most redly to resave Court, King, and
Queene!
Thy polecye and justice may be sene.
War devotioun, wysedome, and honestie,
And credence tynt,¹ thay mycht be found
in thee.

Adew, fair Snawdoun!² with thy touris hie,
Thy Chapell Royall, park, and tabyll
rounde!³
May, June, and July walde I dwell in
thee,⁴
War I one man, to heir the birdis sounde,
Quhilk doith agane thy royall roche re-
dounde.
Adew, Lythquo!⁴ quhose Palyce of ples-
ance
Mycht be one patrone⁵ in Portingall or
France!

Fair-weill, Falkland! the fortrace of Fyfe,
Thy polyte park, under the Lowmound
Law!
Sum-tyne in thee I led ane lustye lyfe,
The fallow deir, to see thame raik on
raw.⁶
Court men to cum to thee, thay stand
gret awe,
Sayand thy burgh bene of all burrowis
bail,⁷
Because in thee thay never gat gude ail.²⁰

THE COMMONYNG BETUIX THE PAPYNGO AND HIR HOLYE EXECUTOURIS⁸

The Pye persavit the Papyngo in paine,
He lychtit down, and fenyteit him to
gret:⁹
'Sister,' said he, 'alace! quho hes yow
slane?
I pray yow, mak provisione for your
spreit,
Dispone your geir,¹⁰ and yow confes com-
pleit.
I have power, be your contritioun,
Of all your mys¹¹ to geve yow full remis-
sioun.

'I am,' said he, 'one Channoun regulare,
And of my brether Pryour principall:³⁰
My quhyte rocket my clene lyfe doith de-
clare;
The blak bene¹² of the deith memo-
riall:
Quharefor I thynk your gudis naturall
Sulde be submyttit hole into my cure;
Ye know I am ane holye creature.'

The Ravin come rolpand,¹³ quhen he hard
the rair;¹⁴
So did the Gled,¹⁵ with mony pieteous
pew;¹⁶
And fenyteitlye thay contrafait gret cair.
'Sister,' said thay, 'your raklesnes we
rew;
Now best it is our juste counsall ensew,
Sen we pretend to heych promotioun,⁴¹
Religious men, of gret devotioun.'

'I am ane blak Monk,' said the rutlande¹⁷
Ravin;
So said the Gled, 'I am ane holy freir,
And hes power to bryng yow quyke to
hevin.
It is weill knawin my conscience bene
full cleir;
The blak Bybill¹⁸ pronounce I sall per-
queir,¹⁹
So tyll our brether ye will geve sum gude;
God wat geve²⁰ we hes neid of lyves
fude!'⁴⁹

The Papyngo said, 'Father, be the Rude,
Howbeit your rayment be religious lyke,
⁸ executors. ⁹ weep. ¹⁰ Dispose of your goods.
¹¹ sins. ¹² are. ¹³ croaking. ¹⁴ rumpus. ¹⁵ Kite.
¹⁶ thin cry. ¹⁷ croaking. ¹⁸ The prayer for the dead.
¹⁹ by heart, *par cœur*. ²⁰ if.

¹ lost. ² An old name of Stirling.
³ An ancient earthwork. ⁴ Linlithgow.
⁵ pattern. ⁶ range in row. ⁷ the worst.

Your conscience, I suspect, be nocht gude.
I did persave quhen prevelye ye did
pyke¹
Ane chekin from ane hen under ane
dyke.²

'I grant,' said he. 'That hen was my gude
freind,
And I that chekin tuke bot for my teind.'²

'Ye know the faith be us mon be susteind:
So be the Pope it is preordinate
That spirituall men suld leve upon thair
teind:

Bot weill wat I ye bene predestinate 60
In your extremis to be so fortunate,
To have sic holy consultatioun;
Qubarefore we mak yow exhortatioun :

'Sen dame Nature hes grantit yow sic
grace,

Layser to mak confessioun generall,
Schaw furth your syn in haist, quhil ye haif
space;

Syne of your geir mak one memoriall.
We thre sal mak your feistis funerall,
And with gret blys bury we sall your bonis,
Syne trentalls twenty trattyll³ all at onis. 70

'The roukis sall rair, that men sall on
thame rew,

And crye *Commemoratio Animarum*.
We sall gar cheknis cheip, and geaslyngis
pew.⁴

Suppose the geis and hennis suld crye
alarum:

And we sall serve *secundum usum Sa-
rum*,

And mak you saif: we fynd Sanct Blase to
borgh,⁵

Cryand for yow the cairfull corrynogh.⁶

'And we sall syng about your sepulture
Sanct Mongois⁷ matynis and the mekle
creid,

And syne devoutly saye, I yow assure, 80
The auld Placebo bakwart, and the beid;⁸

And we sall weir for yow the murnyng
weid

And, thocht your spreit with Pluto war
profest,

Devotelie sall your diregie⁹ be adress.⁷

¹ steal.

² tithe.

³ rattle off twenty services of thirty masses each.

⁴ make chickens chirp and goslings squeak.

⁵ as surety. ⁶ coronach, lament. ⁷ Mungo's (i.e.,

Kentigern's). ⁸ prayer. ⁹ funeral service.

'Father,' said scho, 'your facunde¹⁰ wordis
fair,

Full sode I dreid be contrar to your
dedis.

The wyffis of the village cryis with cair
Quhen thai persave your mowe¹¹ ouir-
thort thar medis;

Your fals consait boith duke and draik¹²
sore dreidis,

I marvell, suithlie,¹³ ye be nocht eschamit
For your defaltis, beyng so defamit. 91

'It dois abhor my pure perturbit spreit
Tyll mak to yow ony confessioun.

I heir men saye ye bene one ypocrite,
Exemptit frome the Senye¹⁴ and the Ses-
sioun.

To put my geir in your possessioun,
That wyll I nocht, so help me Dame Na-
ture!

Nor of my corps I wyll yow geve no cure.

'Bot, had I heir the nobyll Nychtingall,
The gentyll Ja, the Merle, and Turtur
trew, 100

My obsequeis and feistis funerall
Ordour thay wald, with notis of the new.
The plesand Pown,¹⁵ most angellyke of
hew,

Wald God I wer this daye with hym confest,
And my devyse¹⁶ dewlie be hym adress!

'The myrthfull Maveis, with the gay Golds-
pink,

The lustye Larke, wald God thay war
present!

My infortune, forsnith, thay wald forthink,¹⁷
And comforte me that bene so impotent.

The swyft Swallow, in prattick¹⁸ moste
prudent, 110

I wate scho wald my bledyng stem belyve¹⁹
With hir moste verteous stone restring-
ityve.²⁰

'Compt²¹ me the cace, under confessioun,
The Gled said proudlye to the Papingo,

'And we sall sweir, be our professioun,
Counsall to keip, and schaw it to no mo.

We thee beseik, or thou depart us fro,
Declare to us sum causis reasonabyll
Quhy we bene haldin so abhominabyll.

¹⁰ eloquent.

¹¹ ugly mug.

¹² duck and drake.

¹³ forsooth.

¹⁴ Consistory court.

¹⁵ peacock.

¹⁶ testament.

¹⁷ regret.

¹⁸ practice, e.g., house

building. ¹⁹ forthwith. ²⁰ styptic. ²¹ give

account of.

'Be thy travell thou hes experience, ¹²⁰
 First, beand bred in-to the Orient,
 Syne be thy gude servyce and delygence
 To prencis maid heir in the Occident.
 Thow knowis the vulgare pepyllis juge-
 ment
 Qubare thou transcurrit¹ the hote Meridion-
 all,
 Syne nyxt the Poill the plaige ² Septentri-
 onall.

'So, be thyne heych ingyne³ superlatyve,
 Of all countreis thou knowis the quali-
 teis;
 Quharefore, I thee conjure, be God of lyve,
 The veritie declare, withouttin leis,⁴ ¹³⁰
 Quhat thou hes hard, be landis or be seis,
 Of us kirkmen, boith gude and evyll re-
 porte;
 And quhow thay juge, schaw us, we thee
 exhorte.'

'Father,' said scho, 'I, catyve creature,
 Dar nocht presume with sic mater to
 mell.⁵
 Of your caces, ye know, I have no cure;
 Demand thame quhilk in prudence doith
 preceell.⁶
 I maye nocht pew,⁷ my panes bene so
 fell:
 And als, perchance, ye wyll nocht stand
 content
 To know the vulgare pepyllis jugement. ¹⁴⁰

'Yit, wyll the deith alyte⁸ withdrawe his
 darte,
 All that lyeis in my memoryall
 I sall declare with trew unfenyet hart.
 And first I saye to you in generall
 The commoun peple sayith ye bene all
 Degenerit frome your holy pimityvis,⁹
 As testyfeis the proces of your lyvis.

'Of your peirles prudent predecessouris
 The beginnyng, I grant, wes verray gude:
 Apostolis, martyres, virgines, confess-
 ouris, ¹⁵⁰
 The sound of thair excellent sanctitude
 Was hard ouer all the warld, be land and
 flude,
 Plantyng the faith, be predication,
 As Christe had maid to thame narration.

'To fortyfie the faith thay tuke no feir
 Afore prencis, preching full prudentlie;
 Of dolorous deith thay doutit nocht the
 deir,¹⁰
 The veritie declaryng ferventlie;
 And martyrdome thay sufferit pacientlie:
 Thay tuke no cure of land, ryches, nor
 rent; ¹⁶⁰
 Doctryne and deid war boith equivalent.

'To schaw at lenth thair workis wer gret
 wunder,
 Thair myracklis thay wer so manifest.
 In name of Christe thay hailit mony houn-
 der,¹¹
 Rasyng the dede, and purging the pos-
 sest,
 With perverst spreitis quhilkis had bene
 opprest.
 The crukit ran, the blynd men gat thair
 ene,
 The deiff men hard, the lypper¹² war maid
 clene.

'The prelatiis spousit wer with Povertie,
 Those dayis, quhen so thay flurisit in
 fame, ¹⁷⁰
 And with hir generit¹³ lady Chaistitie
 And dame Devotioun, notabyll of name.
 Humyll thay wer, simpyll, and full of
 schame.
 Thus Chaistitie and dame Devotioun
 Wer principall cause of thair promotioun.

'Thus thay contynewit in this lyfe devyne
 Aye tyll thare rang,¹⁴ in Romes gret
 cietie,
 Ane potent prince was namit Constantyne,
 Persavit the Kirk had spowsit Povertie.
 With gude intent, and movit of pietie, ¹⁸⁰
 Cause of divorce he fandte betuix thame
 two,
 And partit thame, withouttin wordis mo.

'Syne, schortlie, with ane gret solempnitie,
 Withouttin ony dispensatioun,
 The Kirk he spowsit with dame Propertie,
 Quhilk haistelye, be proclamatioun,
 To Povertie gart¹⁵ mak narratioun,
 Under the pane of peirsyng of hir eine,¹⁶
 That with the Kirk scho sulde no more be
 seine.

¹ passed. ² region. ³ intelligence. ⁴ lies.
⁵ meddle. ⁶ excel. ⁷ speak. ⁸ a little.
⁹ primitives, the fathers of the church.

¹⁰ injury. ¹¹ healed many hundreds. ¹² lepers.
¹³ begat. ¹⁴ reigned. ¹⁵ he caused.
¹⁶ Upon pain of putting out her eyes.

'Sanet Sylvester that tyme rang Pope in
Rome, 190

Quhilk first consentit to the mariage
Of Propertie,¹ the quhilk began to blome,
Taking on hir the cure with heych cor-
rage.

Devotioun drew hir tyll one heremytage
Quhen scho considerit lady Propertie
So heych exaltit in-to dignitie.

'O Sylvester, quhare was thy discretioun?
Quhilk Peter did renounce, thow did re-
save.

Androw and Jhone did leif thair posses-
sioun,

Thair schippis, and nettis, lynes, and all
the lave;² 200

Of temperall substance no-thing wald
thay have

Contrarious to thair contemplatioun,
Bot soberlye thair sustentatioun.

'Johne the Baptist went to the wyldernes.
Lazarus, Martha, and Marie Magdalene
Left heretage and guddis, more and les.

Prudent Sanet Paule thocht Propertie
prophane;

Frome toun to toun he ran, in wynde and
raue,

Upon his feit, techeing the word of grace,
And never was subjectit to ryches.' 210

The Gled said, 'Yit I heir no-thing bot
gude.

Proceid schortlye, and thy mater avance.'

The Papyngo said, 'Father, be the Rude,
It wer too lang to schaw the circum-
stance,

Quhow Propertie, with hir new alyance,
Grew gret with chylde, as trew men to me
talde,

And bure two dochteris gudelic to behalde.

'The eldest dochter named was Ryches,
The secunde syster, Sensualytie;

Quhilkis did increse, within one schorte pro-
ces, 220

Preplesande³ to the Spiritualitytie.

In gret substance and excellent bewtie
Thir Ladyis two grew so, within few yeiris,
That in the warlde wer non mycht be thair
peiris.

¹ Under Silvester (4th century) the Church first ac-
quired much property.

² rest.

³ Very pleasing.

'This royall Ryches and lady Sensuall
Frome that tyme furth tuke hole the
governance

Of the moste part of the Stait Spirituall:
And thay agane, with humbyll obser-
vance,

Amorouslie thair wyttis did avance,
As trew luffaris, thair ladyis for to pleis. 230
God wate geve⁴ than thair hartis war at eis.

'Soune thay foryet to study, praye, and
preche,

Thay grew so subject to dame Sensuall,
And thocht bot paine pure pepyll for to
teche;

Yit thay decretit, in thair gret Counsall,
Thay wald no more to mariage be thrall,
Traistying surely tyll observe Chaistitie,
And all begylyt, quod⁵ Sensualytie.

'Apperandlye thay did expell thair wyffis
That thay mycht leif at large, without
thirlage,⁶ 240

At libertie to lede thair lustie lyffis,
Thynkand men thrall that bene in mari-
age.

For new faces provokis new corrage.
Thus Chaistitie thay turne in-to delyte;
Wantyng of wyffis bene cause of appetyte.

'Dame Chaistitie did steill away for
schame,

Frome tyme scho did persave thair pro-
viance.⁷

Dame Sensuall one letter gart proclame,
And hir exilit Italy and France.

In Inlande couthe scho get none ordi-
nance.⁸ 250

Than to the kyng and courte of Scotlande
Scho markit hir,⁹ withouttin more demande.

'Traistying in-to that court to get conforte,
Scho maid hir humyll supplycatioun.

Schortlye thay said scho sulde get na sup-
porte,

Bot bosit hir,¹⁰ with blasphematioun,

"To preistis go mak your protestatioun.
It is," said thay, "mony one houndreth yeir
Sen Chaistitie had ony entres¹¹ heir."

'Tyril for travell, scho to the preistis past,
And to the rewlaris of religioun. 261

⁴ knows if.

⁵ quoth, said.

⁶ bondage.

⁷ purveyance, conduct.

⁸ settlement.

⁹ She marched.

¹⁰ ordered her.

¹¹ entry.

Of hir presens schortlye thay war agast,
 Sayand thay thocht it bot abusioun
 Hir to resave: so, with conclusion,
 With one avyce decretit and gave dome,
 Thay walde resset¹ no rebell out of Rome.

"Sulde we resave that Romanis hes refusit,

And baneist Inglande, Italye, and France,
 For your flattrye, than wer we weill abusit.
 Passe hyne,"² said thay, "and fast your
 way avance,"²⁷⁰

Amang the nonnis go seik your ordinance;
 For we have maid aith of fidelytie
 To dame Ryches and Sensualytie."

"Than paciently scho maid progressioun
 Towarde the nonnis, with hart syching
 full sore.

Thay gaif hir presens, with processioun,
 Ressavand hir with honour, laud, and
 glore,

Purposyng to preserve hir ever more.
 Of that novellis³ come to dame Propertie,
 To Ryches, and to Sensualytie;²⁸⁰

"Quhilkis sped thame at the post rycht
 spedalye,
 And sett ane seage proudlye about the
 place.

The sillye nonnis did yeild thame haistelye,
 And humyllye of that gylt askit grace,
 Syne gave thair bandis of perpetuall
 peace.

Ressavand thame, thay kest up wykkets⁴
 wyde:

Than Chaistytye walde no langer abyde.

"So for refuge, fast to the freris scho fled;
 Quhilks said thay wald of ladyis tak no
 cure."

"Quhare bene scho now?" than said the
 gredy Gled.²⁹⁰

"Nocht amang yow," said scho, "I yow
 assure.

I traist scho bene upon the Borrow-mure
 Besouth⁵ Edinburgh, and that rycht mony
 menis,⁶

Profest amang the Systeris of the Schenis.⁷

"Thare hes scho found hir mother Pov-
 ertie,

¹ receive.

² hence.

³ news.

⁴ doors.

⁵ South of.

⁶ lament.

⁷ Sisters in a Dominican nunnery dedicated to St. Catherine of Sienna, on the Burrow-muir of Edinburgh.

And Devotioun, hir awin syster carnall.
 Thare hes scho found Faith, Hope, and
 Charitie,
 Togidder with the Vertues Cardinall.
 Thare hes scho found ane convent yit un-
 thrall

To dame Sensuall, nor with riches abusit;
 So quietly those ladyis bene inclusit.'³⁰¹

The Pyote said, 'I dreid, be thay assail-
 yeit,

Thay rander thame, as did the holy non-
 nis.'

'Doute nocht,' said scho, 'for thay bene so
 artalyeit,'⁸

Thay purpose to defend thame with thair
 gunnis.

Reddy to schute thay have sax gret can-
 nounnis.

Perseverance, Constancye, and Conscience,
 Austerytie, Laubour, and Abstynance.

'To resyste subtell Sensualytie
 Strongly thay bene enarmit, feit and
 handis,'³¹⁰

Be Abstynence, and keipith Povertie,
 Contrar Ryches and all hir fals servandis.
 Thay have ane boumbard braissit up in
 bandis⁹

To keip thair porte, in myddis of thair clois,
 Quhilk is callit, *Domine custodi nos*;

'Within quhose schote thare dar no ene-
 meis

Approche thair place, for dreid of dyntis
 doure.¹⁰

Boith nycht and daye thay wyrk, lyke be-
 sye beis,

For thair defence reddy to stande in
 stoure,¹¹

And hes sic watcheis on thair utter toure
 That dame Sensuall with seage dar not
 assailye,³²¹

Nor cum within the schote of thair ar-
 tailye.'¹²

The Pyote said, 'Quhareto sulde thay pre-
 sume

For to resyste sweit Sensualytie,
 Or dame Ryches, quhilkis reularis bene in
 Rome?

Ar thay more constant, in thair qualytie,
 Nor the prencis of Spiritualityte,

⁸ provided with artillery.

⁹ a hooped mortar.

¹⁰ hard blows.

¹¹ shock of battle.

¹² artillery.

Quhillkis plesandlye, withouttin obstakle,
Haith thame resavit in their habitakle?¹

'Quhow long, traist ye, those ladyis sall
remane 330

So solytar, in sic perfectioun?²
The Papingo said, 'Brother, in certane,
So lang as thay obey correctioun,
Cheisying thair heddis be electioun,
Unthral to Ryches or to Povertie,³
Bot as requyrith thair necessitie.

'O prudent prelatiis, quhare was your
presciance,
That tuke on hand tyll observe Chaisti-
tie,

But³ austeir lyfe, laubour, and abstinence?
Persavit ye nocht the gret prosperitie 340
Apperandlye to cum of Propertie?

Ye know gret cheir, great eais, and ydelnes
To Lychorie was mother and maistres.'

'Thow ravis unrocketit,'⁴ the Ravin said, 'be
the Rude,

So to reprove Ryches or Propertie.
Abraham, and Ysaac war ryche, and ver-
ray gude;

Jacobe and Josephe had prosperitie.'
The Papingo said, 'That is verytie.
Ryches, I grant, is nocht to be refusit,
Providyng alwaye it be nocht abusit.' 350

Than laid the Ravin ane replycatioun,
Syne said, 'Thy reasone is nocht worth
ane myte,

As I sall prove, with protestatioun
That no man tak my wordis in dispyte.
I saye, the temporall prencis hes the
wyte,⁵

That in the Kirk sic pastours dois provyde
To governe saulis, that not tham-selfis can
gyde.

'Lang tyme efter the Kirk tuke Propertie,
The prelatiis levit in gret perfectioun,
Unthral to Ryches or Sensualytie, 360

Under the Holy Spreitis protectioun,
Orderlye chosin be electioun,
As Gregore, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augus-
tyne,

Benedict, Bernard, Clement, Cleit, and
Lyne.⁶

¹ habitation. ² Qy. Propertie (?)

³ Without. ⁴ recklessly. ⁵ blame.

⁶ The first two popes after S. Peter.

'Sic pacient prelatiis enterit be the porte,
Plesand the peple be predicationn.
Now dyke-lowparis⁷ dois in the Kirk resort,
Be symonie, and supplicatioun
Of prencis be thair presentatioun.
So sillie saulis, that bene Christis scheip,
Ar gevin to hungrye gormande⁸ wolfis to
keip. 371

'No marvell is thoct we religious men
Degenerit be, and in our lyfe confusit:
Bot sing, and drynk, none uther craft we
ken;

Our spirituell fatheris hes us so abusit.
Agane our wyll those treukouris⁹ bene
intrusit.

Lawit¹⁰ men hes now religious men in curis;
Profest virgenis in keipung of strong huris.¹¹

'Prencis, prencis, quhar bene your heych
prudence

In dispositioun of your beneficeis? 380
The guerdonyng of your courticience¹²
Is sum cause of thir gret enormyteis.

There is one sorte wattand¹³ lyke houn-
gre fleis,¹⁴
For spirituell cure, thoct thay be no-thing
abyll,

Quhose gredie thristis¹⁵ bene insaciabyll.

'Prencis, I pray yow, be no more abusit,
To verteous men havying so small re-
garde.

Quhy sulde vertew, throuch flattrye, be
refusit,

That men for cunnyng¹⁶ can get no re-
warde?

Allace! that ever one braggar or ane
barde, 390

Ane hure-maister, or commoun hasarture,¹⁷
Sulde in the Kirk get ony kynde of cure!

'War I one man worthy to weir ane crown,
Aye quhen thare vakit¹⁸ ony beneficeis,

I suld gar call ane congregatioun,
The principall of all the prelaceis,
Moste cunnyng clerkis of universiteis,
Moste famous fatheris of religioun,
With thair advyse mak dispositioun.

'I suld dispone all offices pastorallis 400
Tyll doctouris of devynitie, or jure;¹⁹

⁷ leapers over the wall. ⁸ greedy. ⁹ tricksters.

¹⁰ Lewd, unlearned. ¹¹ whores. ¹² courtiers.

¹³ waiting. ¹⁴ fleas. ¹⁵ thirsts. ¹⁶ skill, knowledge.

¹⁷ gambler. ¹⁸ fell vacant. ¹⁹ law.

And cause dame Vertew pull up all hir
saillis,
Quhen cunnynge men had in the Kirk
moist cure;
Gar lordis send thair sonnes, I yow as-
sure,
To seik science, and famous sculis fre-
quent;
Syne thame promote that wer moste sapi-
ent.

'Gret plesour wer to heir ane byschope
preche,
One deane, or doctour in divinitie,
One abbote quhilk could weill his convent
teche,
One persoun¹ flowing in phylosophie. ⁴¹⁰
I tyne² my tyme to wys³ quhilk wyll
nocht be.
War nocht⁴ the preaching of the Begging
Freris,
Tynt war the faith amang the seculeris.'

'As for thair precheing,' quod the Pa-
pingo,
'I thame excuse, for quhy, thay bene so
thrall
To Propertie, and hir ding⁵ dochteris two,
Dame Ryches, and fair lady Sensuall,
That may nocht use no pastyme spirit-
uall;
And in thair habitis thay tak sic delyte
Thay have reuincit russat and raploch
quhyte,⁶ ⁴²⁰

'Cleikand⁷ to thame skarlote and cram-
mosie,⁸
With menever, martrik, grice, and ryche
armyne.⁹
Thair lawe hartis exaultit ar so hie,
To see thair papale pompe it is ane
pyne.¹⁰
More ryche arraye is now, with frenyeis¹¹
fyne,
Upon the bardyng¹² of ane byscheopis
mule,
Nor ever had Paule or Peter agane Yule.

'Syne fair ladyis thair chene may not es-
chape,
Dame Sensuall sic seid haith in tham
sawin,

¹ parson. ² lose. ³ wish. ⁴ If it had not
been for. ⁵ digne, worthy. ⁶ homespun white.
⁷ Taking. ⁸ crimson. ⁹ miniver, marten, grey,
and rich ermine. ¹⁰ pain. ¹¹ fringes. ¹² caparison.

Les skaith¹³ it war, with lycence of the
Pape,
That ilke prelate one wyfe had of his ⁴³⁰
awin,
Nor se thair bastardis ouirthort the coun-
tre blawin;¹⁴
For now, be thay be weill cumin frome the
sculis,
Thay fall to work as thay war commoun
bullis.'

'Pew!' ¹⁵ quod the Gled, 'thow prechis all
in vaine:
Ye seculare floks hes of our cace no
curis.'¹⁶
'I grant,' said scho; 'yit men wyll speik
agane,
Quhow ye haif maid a hundreth thousand
huris
Quhilkis nevir had bene war not your
lychorous luris.
And geve I lee,¹⁷ hartlye I me repent; ⁴⁴⁰
Was never bird, I watt, more penitent.'

Than scho hir shrave,¹⁸ with devote contyn-
ance,
To that fals Gled quhilk fenyeit hym one
freir;
And quhen scho had fulfyllit hir pennance,
Full subtellye at hir he gan inquire:
'Cheis yow,' said he, 'quhilk of us
brether heir
Sall have of all your naturall geir the
curis.
Ye know none bene more holye creaturis.'

'I am content,' quod the pure Papingo,
'That ye frier Gled, and Corby Monk,
your brother, ⁴⁵⁰
Have cure of all my guddis, and no mo,
Sen at this tyme freindschip I fynd non
uther.'
'We salbe to yow trew, as tyll our
mother,'
Quod thay, and sweir tyll fulfyll hir intent.
'Of that,' said scho, 'I tak ane instru-
ment.'

The Pyote said, 'Qubat sall myne office
bee?'
'Ouirman,' ¹⁹ said scho, 'unto the tother
two.'

¹³ harm. ¹⁴ blown all over the country. ¹⁵ Pshaw.
¹⁶ Our condition is no affair of you secular flocks (or,
more probably, *folks*).
¹⁷ if I lie. ¹⁸ confessed. ¹⁹ Overseer, umpire.

The rowpand Revin said, 'Sweit syster, lat
see
Your holy intent; for it is tyme to go.'
The gredie Gled said, 'Brother, do nocht
so; 460
We wyll remane, and haldin up hir hede,
And never depart from hir till scho be
dede.'

The Papingo thame thankit tenderlye,
And said, 'Sen ye have tane on yow this
cure,
Depart myne naturall guddis equalye,
That ever I had or hes of dame Nature,
First, to the Howlet,¹ indigent and pure,
Quhilk on the daye, for schame, dar nocht
be sene;
Tyll hir I laif my gaye galbarte² of grene.

'My brycht depurit ene,³ as christall cleir,
Unto the Bak⁴ ye sall thame boith pre-
sent; 471
In Phebus presens quhilk dar nocht appeir,
Of naturall sycht scho bene so impotent.
My birneist⁵ beik I laif, with gude en-
tent,
Unto the gentyll, pieteous Pellicane,
To helpe to peirs hir tender hart in twane.

'I laif the Goik,⁶ quhilk hes no sang bot
one,
My musyke, with my voce angelycall;
And to the Guse ye geve, quhen I am
gone,
My eloquence and toung rhetoricall. 480
And tak and drye my bonis, gret and
small,
Syne close thame in one cais of ebure⁷
fyne,
And thame present onto the Phenix syne,

'To birne with hir quhen scho hir lyfe
renewis.
In Arabye ye sall hir fynde but weir,⁸
And sall knaw hir be hir moste hevynly
hewis,
Gold, asure, gowles,⁹ purpoure, and syno-
peir.¹⁰
Hir dait¹¹ is for to leif fyve houndreth
yeir.
Mak to that bird my commendatioun.
And als, I mak yow supplicatioun, 490

'Sen of my corps I have yow gevin the
cure,
Ye speid yow to the court, but tareyng,
And tak my hart, of perfyte portrature,
And it present unto my Soverane Kyng:
I wat he wyll it clois in-to one ryng.
Commende me to his Grace, I yow exhorte,
And of my passion mak hym trew reporte.

'Ye thre my trypes sall have, for your
travell,¹²
With luffer and lowng,¹³ to part equale
amang yow;
Prayand Pluto, the potent prince of hell,
Geve ye failye, that in his feit he fang¹⁴
yow. 501
Be to me trew, thocht I no-thing belang
yow.
Sore I suspect your conscience be too large.'
'Doute nocht,' said they, 'we tak it with
the charge.'

'Adew, brether!' quod the pure Papingo;
'To talking more I have no time to tarye;
Bot, sen my spreit mon fra my body go,
I recommend it to the Quene of Farye,
Eternallye in-tyll hir court to carye,
In wyldernes among the holtis hore.¹⁵ 510
Than scho inelynit hir hed, and spak no
more.

Plungit in-tyll hir mortall passioun,
Full grevouslie scho gryppit to the
ground.
It war too lang to mak narratioun
Of sychis sore, with mony stang and
stound.¹⁶
Out of hir wound the blude did so abound,
One compas round was with hir blude maid
reid:
Without remeid,¹⁷ thare wes no-thing bot
dede.¹⁸

And be¹⁹ scho had *In Manus tuas* said,
Extinctit wer hir naturall wyttis fyve;
Hir heid full softlye on hir schulder laid,
Syne yeild the spreit, with panes pung-
ityve.²⁰ 522
The Ravin began rudely to rug and ryve,
Full gormondlyke,²¹ his emptie throte to
feid.
'Eit softlye, brother,' said the gredy Gled:

¹ owl. ² mantle. ³ eyes. ⁴ bat. ⁵ burnished.
⁶ cuckoo. ⁷ ivory. ⁸ without doubt. ⁹ red.
¹⁰ green. ¹¹ date, term of life.

¹² travail, work. ¹³ liver and lung. ¹⁴ seize.
¹⁵ gray wooded hills. ¹⁶ sting and pang. ¹⁷ remedy.
¹⁸ death. ¹⁹ by the time that. ²⁰ keen. ²¹ gluttonlike.

'Quhill scho is hote, depart hir evin amang
us.
Tak thow one half, and reik¹ to me ane-
uther.
In-tyll our rycht, I wat, no wycht dar wrang
us.'
The Pyote said, 'The feind resave the
fouther!²
Quhy mak ye me stepbarne, and I your
brother?⁵³⁰
Ye do me wrang, schir Gled, I schrew³ your
harte.'
'Tak thare,' said he, 'the puddyngis⁴ for
thy parte.'

Than, wyt ye weill, my hart wes wounder
sair

For to behalde that dolent departyng,⁵
Hir angell fedderis fleying in the air.

Except the hart, was left of hir no-thing.
The Pyote said, 'This pertenth to the
Kyng,
Quhilk tyll his Grace I purpose to pre-
sent.'
'Thow,' quod the Gled, 'sall fail of thyne
entent.'

The Revin said, 'God! nor I rax in ane
raipe,⁵⁴⁰

And⁶ thow get this tyll outhir kyng or
duke!'

The Pyote said, 'Plene I nocht⁷ to the
Pape

Than in ane smedie⁸ I be smorit⁹ with
smuke.'

With that the Gled the pece claucht in
his cluke,¹⁰

And fled his way: the lave, with all thair
mycht,

To chace the Gled, flew all out of my sycht.

Now have ye hard this lytill tragedie,
The sore complent, the testament, and
myschance

Of this pure bird quhilk did ascend so
hie.

Beseikand yow excuse myne ignorance
And rude indyte,¹¹ quhilk is nocht tyll
avance.⁵⁵¹

And to the quair,¹² I geve commandment,
Mak no repair quhair poetis bene present.

Because thow bene
But Rethorike, so rude,
Be never sene
Besyde none other buke,
With Kyng, nor Quene,
With lord, nor man of gude.
With coit¹³ unclene,⁵⁶⁰
Clame kynrent¹⁴ to sum cuke;
Steil in ane nuke¹⁵
Quhen thay lyste on thee luke.
For smell of smuke
Men wyll abhor to beir thee.
Heir I manesweir¹⁶ thee;
Quhairfor, to lurke go leir¹⁷ thee.

KITTY'S CONFESSION

THE CURATE AND KITTY

THE Curate Kittie culd confesse,
And scho tald on baith mair and lesse.

Quhen scho was telland as scho wist,¹⁸
The Curate Kittie wald have kist;
Bot yit ane countenance he bure
Degeist,¹⁹ devote, daine,²⁰ and demure;
And syne began hir to exempte.²¹
He wes best at the efter game.

Quod he, 'Have ye na wrangous geir?'²²
Quod scho, 'I staw²³ ane pek of beir.'²⁴ ¹⁰

Quod he, 'That suld restorit be,
Tharefor delyver it to me.

Tibbie and Peter bad me speir²⁵;
Be my conscience, thay sall it heir.'

Quod he, 'Leve ye in lecherie?'
Quod scho, 'Will Leno mowit²⁶ me.'

Quod he, 'His wyfe that sall I tell,
To mak hir acquaintance with my-sell.'

Quod he, 'Ken ye na heresie?'
'I wait nocht quhat that is,' quod sche. ²⁰

Quod he, 'Hard ye na Inglis bukis?'²⁷
Quod scho, 'My maister on thame lukis.'

Quod he, 'The bischop that sall know,
For I am sworne that for to schaw.'

Quod he, 'What said he of the King?'
Quod scho, 'Of gude he spak na-thing.'

Quod he, 'His Grace of that sall wit;
And he sall lose his lyfe for it.'

Quhen scho in mynd did mair revolve,
Quod he, 'I can nocht you absolve,³⁰

Bot to my chalmer cum at even
Absolvit for to be and schrevin.'

¹ reach. ² the lot. ³ beshrew. ⁴ entrails.
⁵ doleful dividing. ⁶ May I stretch on a rope, i.e.,
hang, if, etc. ⁷ If I do not complain. ⁸ smithy.
⁹ smothered. ¹⁰ clutched in his claw. ¹¹ style.
¹² quire, book.

¹³ coat. ¹⁴ kindred. ¹⁵ nook. ¹⁶ forswear.
¹⁷ learn. ¹⁸ as best she knew. ¹⁹ Grave. ²⁰ modest.
²¹ examine. ²² illicit possessions. ²³ stole. ²⁴ barley.
²⁵ ask. ²⁶ toyed with. ²⁷ Reformation writings,
especially the Bible, printed in England.

Quod scho, "I wyll pas tyll ane-uther.
 And I met with Schir Andro, my brother,
 And he full clenely did me schryve.
 Bot he wes sumthing talkatye;
 He speirit¹ mony strange case,
 How that my lufe did me inbrace,
 Quhat day, how oft, quhat sort, and quhare?
 Quhat he, "I wald I had bene there."² 40
 He me absolvit for ane plak,³
 Thocht⁴ he na pryce with me wald mak;
 And mekil Latyne he did mummill,
 I hard na-thing bot hummill bummill.
 He schew me nocht of Goddis word,
 Quhilk scharper is than ony sword,
 And deip intill our hart dois prent
 Our syn, quharethrow we do repent.
 He pat me na-thing into feir,
 Quharethrow I suld my syn forbeir; 50
 He schew me nocht the maledictioun
 Of God for syn, nor the afflictioun
 And in this lyfe the greit mischeif
 Ordanit to punische hure and theif;
 Nor schew he me of hellis pane,
 That I mycht feir, and vice refraine;
 He counsalit me nocht till abstene,
 And leid ane holy lyfe, and clene.
 Of Christis blude na-thing he knew,
 Nor of His promisses full trew,
 That saifs all that wyll beleve,
 That Sathan sall us never greve.
 He teichit me nocht for till traist
 The confort of the Haly Ghaist.
 He bad me nocht to Christ be kynd,
 To keip His law with hart and mynd,
 And lufe and thank His greit mercie,
 Fra syn and hell that savit me;
 And lufe my nichtbour as my-sell.
 Of this na-thing he culd me tell, 70
 Bot gave me pennance, ilk ane day
 Ane *Ave Marie* for to say,
 And Fridayis fyve na fische to eit,
 (Bot butter and eggis ar better meit),
 And with ane plak to buy ane messe
 Fra drounkin Schir Jhone Latynesle.
 Quod he, "Ane plak I wyll gar Sandie
 Give thee agane, with handie dandio."⁵ 4
 Syne⁶ into pilgrimage to pas —
 The verray way to wantounes.
 Of all his pennance I was glaid,
 I had them all perqueir,⁷ I said.
 To mow and steill I ken the pryce,
 I sall it set on cincq and syce.⁷

Bot he my counsale culd nocht keip;
 He maid him be the fyre to sleip,
 Syne cryit, "Collaris,⁸ beif and coillis,⁹
 Hois, and schone with dowbill soillis,
 Caikis and candill, creische¹⁰ and salt,
 Curnis¹¹ of meill, and luiffillis¹² of malt, 90
 Wollin and linning, werp and woft —
 Dame! keip the keis of your woll loft!"
 Throw drink and sleip maid him to raif;
 And swa with us thay play the knaif.⁷

Freiris sweiris be thair professioun
 Nane can be saif but¹³ this Confessioun,
 And garris all men understand
 That it is Goddis awin command.
 Yit it is nocht but mennis drame,
 The pepill to confound and schame. 100
 It is nocht ellis but mennis law,
 Maid mennis mindis for to knaw,
 Quharethrow thay syle¹⁴ thame as thay
 will,

And makis thair law conforme tharetill,
 Sittand in mennis conscience
 Abone Goddis magnificence;
 And dois the pepill teche and tyste¹⁵
 To serve the Pape the Antechriste.

To the greit God Omnipotent
 Confess thy syn, and sore repent; 110
 And traist in Christ, as wrytis Paule,
 Quhilk sched his blude to saif thy saule;
 For nane can thee absolve bot He,
 Nor tak away thy syn frome thee.
 Gif of gude counsall thow hes neid,
 Or hes nocht leirnit weill thy Creid,
 Or wickit vicis regne in thee,
 The quhilk thow can nocht mortifie,
 Or be in desperatioun,
 And wald have consolatioun, 120
 Than till ane preichour trew thow pas,
 And schaw thy syn and thy trespas.
 Thow neidis nocht to schaw him all,
 Nor tell thy syn baith greit and small,
 Quhilk is impossible to be;
 Bot schaw the vice that troubillis thee,
 And he sall of thy saule have reuth,
 And thee instruct in-to the treuth,
 And with the Word of Veritie
 Sall confort and sall counsall thee, 130
 The sacramentis schaw thee at lenth,
 Thy lytle faith to stark and strenth,¹⁶
 And how thow suld thame richtlie use,
 And all hypoerisie refuse.

¹ asked about. ² the third of a penny. ³ Though.
⁴ a child's guessing game. ⁵ Then. ⁶ by heart.
⁷ "five and six," dicing terms.

⁸ Collars. ⁹ coals. ¹⁰ lard. ¹¹ Grains. ¹² hand-
 fuls. ¹³ without. ¹⁴ deceive. ¹⁵ decoy. ¹⁶ to
 increase and strengthen.

Confessioun first wes ordanit fre
 In this sort in the Kirk to be.
 Swa to confes as I descryve,¹
 Wes in the gude Kirk primitiye;
 Swa wes confessioun ordanit first,
 Thocht Codrus² kyte³ suld cleve and birst. 139

THE TESTAMENT OF SQUIRE MELDRUM

THE holie man Iob, ground of pacience,
 In his greit trubill trewlie did report, —
 Quhilk I persave, now, be experience, —
 That mennis lyfe, in eirth, bene⁴ wounder
 short.

My youth is gane; and eild⁵ now dois resort:
 My time is gane; I think it bot ane dreame:
 Yit efter deith remane sall my gude fame.

I persave shortlie that I man⁶ pay my det:
 To me in eirth no place bene permanent:
 My hart on it no mair now will I set, 10
 Bot, with the help of God omnipotent,
 With resolute mind, go mak my Testament,
 And tak my leif at cuntriemen and kyn,
 And all the warld: and thus I will begyn.

Thrie Lordis to me sal be executouris, —
 Lindesayis, all thrie, in surname of renoun:
 Of my Testament thay sall have hail⁷ the
 cure,⁸

To put my mind⁹ till executioun.
 That surname failyeit¹⁰ never to the Croun;
 Na mair will thay to me, I am richt sure,
 Quhilk is the caus that I give them the
 cure. 21

First, David, Erll of Craufuird, wise and
 wicht;¹¹

And Iohne, Lord Lindesay, my maister
 special.

The thrid sal be ane nobill travellit Knight,
 Quhilk knawis the coistis of feistis funeral:
 The wise Sir Walter Lindesay they him cal,
 Lord of St. Iohne, and Knight of Torfi-
 chane,

Be sey and land ane vailyeand Capitane.

Thocht age hes maid my bodie impotent,
 Yit in my hart hie courage doeth pre-
 cell;¹² 30

¹ describe. ² A poet ridiculed by Virgil in the
Ecloques. ³ belly. ⁴ is. ⁵ old age. ⁶ must.
⁷ wholly. ⁸ care. ⁹ intention. ¹⁰ failed. ¹¹ brave,
 stout. ¹² dominate.

Quhairfoir, I leif to God, with gude intent,
 My spreit, the quhilk he hes maid immor-
 tell,
 Intill his Court perpetuallie to dwell,
 And nevir moir to steir¹³ furth of that
 steid,
 Till Christ discend and judge baith quick
 and deid.

I yow beseik, my Lordis Executouris,
 My geir¹⁴ geve till the nixt of my kynrent.¹⁵
 It is weill kend,¹⁶ I never tuik na cures
 Of conquessing of riches nor of rent:
 Dispone¹⁷ as ye think maist expedient. 40
 I never tuik cure of gold more than of glas.
 Without honour, fy, fy vpon riches!

I yow requiest, my friendis, ane and all,
 And nobill men, of quhome I am descendit,
 Fail not to be at my feist funeral,
 Quhilk throw the warld, I traist, sal be
 commendit.

Ye know how that my fame I have defendit,
 During my life, unto this latter hour,
 Quhilk suld to yow be infinit plesour.

First, of my bowellis clenge¹⁸ my bodie
 clene, 50

Within and out; syne,¹⁹ wesche it weill with
 wyne, —

Bot honestie²⁰ see that nothing be sene; —
 Syne, clois it in ane coistlie carvit schryne
 Of ceder treis, or of cyper fyne:

Anoynt my corps with balme delicious,
 With cynamome, and spycis precious.

In twa caissis of gold and precious stanis
 Inclois my hart and tounge, richt craftelie:
 My sepulture, sune, gar²¹ mak for my banis,
 Into the Tempill of Mars, triumphandlie, 60
 Of marbill stanis carvit richt curioslie,
 Quhairin my kist²² and banis ye sall clois,
 In that triumphand Tempill to repois.

Mars, Venus, and Mercurius, all thre
 Gave me my natural inclinaciounis,
 Quhilk rang²³ the day of my nativitie;
 And sa thair hevinlie constellaciounis
 Did me support in monie natiounis.
 Mars maid me hardie like ane feirs lyoun,
 Quhairthrow I conqueist honour and re-
 noun. 70

¹³ stir. ¹⁴ property. ¹⁵ kindred. ¹⁶ known.
¹⁷ Dispose. ¹⁸ cleanse. ¹⁹ then. ²⁰ Without honor.
²¹ cause. ²² coffin. ²³ reigned.

Quho list to knaw the actis bellical,¹
 Let thame go reid the legend of my life;
 Thair sall thai find the deidis martiall,
 How I have stand, in monie stalwart strife,
 Victoriouslie, with speir, sheild, sword, and
 knife:

Quhairfoir, to Mars, the God Armipotent,
 My corps incloisit ye do till him present.

Mak offering of my toung rhetoricall
 Till Mercurius, quhilk gaif me eloquence,
 In his Tempill to hing perpetuall: 80
 I can mak him na better recompence;
 For, quhen I was broecht to the presence
 Of Kings, in Scotland, Ingland, and in
 France,
 My ornate toung my honour did avance.

To fresche Venus my hart ye sall present,
 Quhilk hes to me bene, ay, comfortabill:
 And in my face sic grace scho did imprent,
 All creatures did think me amiabill.
 Wemen to me scho maid sa favorabill,
 Wes never ladie that luikit in my face, 90
 Bot honestlie I did obtene hir grace.

And, syne, hing vp, above my sepulture,
 My bright harness, my scheild, and als my
 speir,

Togidder with my courtlie coit armour,
 Quhilk I wes wont upon my bodie beir,
 In France, in Ingland, being at the weir;²
 My baner, basnet,³ with my temperall,⁴
 As bene the use of feistis funerall.

This beand⁵ done, I pray yow tak the pane
 My Epitaphe to writ, upon this wyis, 100
 Abone my grave, in goldin letteris fyne:
 'The maist invincibill weiriour heir lyis,
 During his time quhilk wan sic laud and
 prysis,
 That throw the hevinis sprang his nobil
 fame:

Victorious William Meldrum wes his name.'

Adew! my Lordis; I may na langer tarie:
 My Lord Lindesay, adew! abone all uther.
 I pray to God, and to the Virgine Marie,
 With your Lady to leif lang in the Struthir.
 Maister Patrik, with young Normond, your
 brother, 110

With my Ladies, your sisteris, al, adew!
 My departing, I wait weill, ye will rew.

¹ warlike. ² war. ³ helmet. ⁴ coat-armour. ⁵ being.

Bot, maist of all, the fair Ladies of France,
 Quhen thai heir tell, but dout, that I am
 deid,

Extreme dolour wil change thair counte-
 nance,

And, for my saik, will weir the murning
 weid.

Quhent hir novellis⁶ dois into Ingland spreid,
 Of Londoun, than, the lustie ladies cleir
 Will, for my saik, mak dule and drierie cheir.

Of Craigfergus my dayis darling, adew! 120
 In all Ireland of feminine the flour.

In your querrell twa men of weir I slew,
 Quhilk purposit to do yow dishonour.
 Ye suld have bene my spous and paramour,
 With rent and riches for my recompence,
 Quhilk I refusit, throw youth and insolence.

Fair weill! ye lemant⁷ lampis of lustines
 Of fair Scotland: adew! my Ladies all.
 During my youth, with ardent besines,
 Ye know how I was in your service thrall.
 Ten thowsand times adew! above thame
 all, 131

Sterne⁸ of Stratherne, my Ladie Soverane,
 For quhom I sched my blud with mekill
 pane!

Yit, wald my Ladie luke, at evin and morrow,
 On my Legend at lenth, scho wald not mis
 How, for hir saik, I sufferit mekill sorrow.
 Yit, give⁹ I might, at this time, get my wis,¹⁰
 Of hir sweet mouth, deir God, I had ane kis.
 I wis in vane: allace! we will dissever. 139
 I say na mair: sweit hart adew for ever!

Brether in Armes, adew, in generall!
 For me, I wait,¹¹ your hartis bene full soir.
 All trew companeounis, into speciall,
 I say to yow, adew, for evermoir,
 Till that we meit agane with God in Gloir!
 Sir Curat, now gif me, incontinent,
 My crysme,¹² with the holie Sacrament.

My Spreit hartlie I recommend
 In manus tuas, Domine.
 My hoip to the is till ascend, 150
 Rex, quia redemisti me.
 Fra syn resurrexisti me;
 Or ellis my saull had bene forlorne:
 With sapience docuisti me;
 Blist be the hour that thow wes borne!

⁶ these news. ⁷ flaming. ⁸ star. ⁹ if. ¹⁰ wish.
¹¹ wot, know. ¹² extreme unction.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ROBERT MANNING OF BRUNNE

ROBERT MANNING lived, perhaps as a canon, in various houses of the Gilbertine order in Lincolnshire. For a score of years, he tells us, he was in the priory of Brunnewake in Kesteven, six miles from Sempringham, in the extreme south of the county; and here in 1303 he began the *Handling Sin*, a free translation in 12,632 lines of William of Waddington's French *Manuel des Pechiez*. (Waddington is an insignificant place four miles south of Lincoln.) It is, he carefully explains, a manual of sins for unlearned people, treating of the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, and the like, in purposely simple English, and garnished with sixty-five attractive tales—more than the French version has. Of these the two in the text are fair samples, although the first is not in the French at all, and the second is much shorter there. The rest of our extract is valuable as illustrating the manners of the time; indeed the *Handling Sin* is an entertaining poem, and a worthy forerunner of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis*. The other important work of Manning's is his *Chronicle*, finished about 1338 at the priory of Sixtill (or Six Hills), in the middle of Lincolnshire. The first part of this is a translation of Wace's *Brut*, the second of Pierre Langtoft's French *Chronicle*. Langtoft was born presumably at the hamlet of that name close to Brunne (or Bourne), and was Canon of Bridlington, on the Yorkshire coast. From such indications as these we can infer that there was a good deal of literary activity in the northern countries in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It is an odd little circumstance that at another Gilbertine house at which Robert Manning stayed—at Cambridge—he met Robert the Bruce, and was at a feast with Bruce's two brothers, one of whom "made a carved king," says Manning, "and was the best artist of his time."

The first part of the *Chronicle* has been edited by Thomas Hearne, Oxford, 1725, and the second by Furnivall, London, 1889; the *Handling Sin*, by Furnivall for the Early English Text Soc., London, 1901-03. The present text is Furnivall's with a few changes in punctuation and typography; thus the letters *ȝ* and *þ* have been replaced by their modern equivalents, *u* and *v* distinguished, and the capitalization normalized.

THE GAWAIN POET

THE unknown author¹ of four poems in the British Museum manuscript Cotton Nero A. X + 4 is one of the most distinguished literary figures of the Middle Ages in England. The poems are *The Pearl*, *Cleanness* (or *Purity*), *Patience*, and *Gawain and the Green Knight*—all edited by R. Morris for the E. E. T. S., the first three in *Early English Alliterative Poems*, the last in *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (revised by Gollancz, 1912); later editions of *The Pearl* by C. G. Osgood in the Belles Lettres Series, 1906, and by I. Gollancz, London, 1907; and of *Patience* by H. Bateson, Manchester, 1912. *The Pearl* is a highly finished elegy in an elaborate stanza; *Gawain* is a stirring Arthurian romance, informed with a beautiful spirit of honor and purity. Of these two we give complete translations, with a sample of the original text. *Patience* and *Cleanness*, of 500 and 1800 lines respectively, are written in the most powerful and highly colored alliterative verse, the former telling the story of Jonah, the latter Belshazzar's impious feast and fate.

¹ It ought to be noted that the identification of the author of *Gawain and the Green Knight* with that of *The Pearl*, etc., is based on internal evidence and is not universally accepted.

These four, with *Winner and Waster* and *The Parliament of the Three Ages* (edited together by Gollancz for the Roxburghe Club, 1897) and the Thornton *Morte Arthure* (edited by Perry and Brock for the E. E. T. S., and by M. M. Banks, London, 1900; translation by A. Boyle in Everyman's Library), are the artistic culmination of the great alliterative revival of the fourteenth century. Of our author we know only what can be deduced from his works — that he was a native of Lancashire or thereabouts, since he uses the North-West-Midland dialect; a person of chivalrous as well as religious feeling; highly educated, and conversant with the best society of his time. Guesses about his personality may be found in Gollancz and Bateson. His work appears to fall within the third quarter of the fourteenth century.

The exact signification of *The Pearl* has of late been much discussed. The opinion that it is mainly a religious allegory written to support certain theological opinions, though cast with consummate skill into the form of an elegy, has made much headway since it was proposed by W. H. Schofield in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. xix (1904), p. 154; yet many scholars still prefer to consider that it is a genuine lament for a little child, and that the theological matter is secondary. Although a vision setting was one of the commonest devices of mediæval poetry, as one may see in the *Romance of the Rose*, Dante, and Chaucer, the only piece known that bears any striking resemblance to *The Pearl* is Boccaccio's fourteenth eclogue, probably composed in 1360: their relationship is discussed in Schofield's article, p. 204, and in Osgood's introduction. *The Pearl* has been translated by Gollancz (1891), by S. Weir Mitchell (N. Y., 1906 — incomplete), by G. C. Coulton (1906), by C. G. Osgood (1907), by Sophie Jewett (N. Y., 1908), and by Miss Jessie Weston (in *Romance, Vision, and Satire*, Boston, 1912).

Gawain and the Green Knight represents and crowns a great number of Gawain romances, most of which were collected by Sir Frederick Madden in his *Sir Gawayne*, edited for the Bannatyne Club in 1839. Gawain was originally the hero *par excellence* of the Round Table, a knight peerless for utter courage and courtesy. Other heroes in time and in turn became more popular than he, and in some of the French prose romances of the thirteenth century his character was defaced that others might appear to excel him; and Malory and Tennyson have unfortunately perpetuated the debased portrait. The immediate source of our poem was probably a lost French romance. The only editions are Madden's, which is rare, and Morris's, but a new one is preparing. Translations have been published by Miss Weston in *Arthurian Romances Unrepresented in Malory's Morte d'Arthur*, No. 1, London, 1898, in prose, and in *Romance, Vision, and Satire* in verse; by E. J. B. Kirtlan, London (1912), and by C. M. Lewis, New Haven, Conn., 1913 — the last a free retelling. Recent articles are those of Knott in *Modern Language Notes*, xxx (1915), p. 102, and Hulbert in *Modern Philology*, xiii (1915), p. 433. An important *Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* by Professor Kittredge has just been published, Cambridge, Mass., 1916.

The translations of *The Pearl* and *Gawain and the Green Knight* here offered were made in full knowledge of the difficulty, well-nigh futility, of the task, and aim simply at sticking close to the text and shirking none of the hard places.

WILLIAM LANGLAND

UPON the dubious evidence of notes in certain of the manuscripts the author of *Piers Plowman* is generally considered to be one William Langland, of Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire; and by the equally unsafe method of identifying the Long Will of the poem with the author a sort of biography has been made out for him. But as a matter of fact the authorship is uncertain.

The poem itself was extremely popular, so that numerous manuscripts of it still exist. These fall into three groups, making three versions: the A text is a succinct vision concerning Piers the Plowman in eight *passus*, followed by four *passus* of the vision of Do Wel, Do Bet, and Do Best. This is usually termed the earliest version, written perhaps in

1362. Two revisions and enlargements are called the B and C texts, and dated 1377 and 1399 respectively. These have generally been deemed the work of the first author; but within the last decade the opinion has spread that they are the work of different hands.

The poem is one of the most significant of the age, picturing as it does with graphic simplicity the social and political life of the times from the standpoint of the masses. It is an indispensable counterpart to the more artistic and more fashionable works of Chaucer. In form *Piers Plowman* is an allegorical vision, written in the old-fashioned alliterative metre which was undergoing so remarkable a revival in this century.

The standard edition is W. W. Skeat's in two volumes, London, 1886, containing all three versions with a complete apparatus. Professor Manly states his new theory in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, II, 1; and both sides of the case are presented in the E. E. T. S. publication, *The Piers Plowman Controversy*, being Original Series, Extra Issue 139 b, c, d, e, London, 1910 (published 1912).

The present modernization follows line by line what seems to have been the original form of the A version, as given by Skeat; the attempt being made to preserve as much of the alliteration as possible, but yet render the language intelligible to the general reader.

JOHN GOWER

JOHN GOWER, who for centuries ranked as the peer of Chaucer, died an old man in 1408; and his splendid tomb may still be seen in St. Saviour's Church, Southwark. He was a well-to-do member of an extensive Kentish family, and possibly a merchant. Practically nothing is known of his life, but we possess his long and interesting will. His chief works were the *Speculum Meditantis* or *Miroir de l'Omme* (before 1380), a French poem of some 30,000 lines, treating of the sins, passing in review the various classes of the world, and giving the scheme of salvation; the *Vox Clamantis* (1382), some 10,000 lines in Latin, sombre, grandiose, largely allegorical, depicting the degeneracy of the times as indicated by the great Peasants' Revolt of 1381; and finally the *Confessio Amantis* (1390) in English, about 33,000 lines in eight books. In this an elderly lover, dissatisfied with his rewards, is made to confess to Genius, Venus' priest, who elucidates for him the points of shrift by over a hundred stories, — with manifold digressions and inconsistencies, — and finally counsels the lover to renounce love and pursue morality. The style of these stories is smooth and lucid, the narrative admirably direct.

Gower is one of the pillars of English literature: he writes in the same pure and elegant language as Chaucer, and though much more conservative — more "mediæval" — than Chaucer, lacking indeed his genius and humor, he represents worthily the tendencies of his time.

The standard edition is that of G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols., Oxford, 1901, from which our extracts are taken. The capitalization has been modernized.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

GEOFFREY CHAUCER was born in London presumably about 1340, the son of a highly reputable wine-merchant. From the royal records and household accounts we obtain an unusually accurate knowledge of his external life. We first discover him at seventeen, a page in the house of the Countess of Ulster, wife of Prince Lionel, third son of Edward III; and a few years later a valet and finally a squire of the King, serving to some extent John of Gaunt also, Edward's fourth son. When about twenty-six he married Philippa, a lady of the court, probably sister of John of Gaunt's third wife, Katherine Swynford. From his royal masters and friends Chaucer and his wife received for their services pensions ranging from forty to sixty pounds yearly, which might represent \$3800 or \$5200 of our money; and similar grants were continued to the poet after Philippa's death by Edward III's successors, Richard II and Henry IV. Chaucer held two

custom-house appointments, one for twelve, and one for four years, for which he received the customary fees, whatever they were. At least seven times he was sent abroad — to Flanders, France, and Italy — on the King's business, diplomatic and commercial; and we have records of payments to him on these occasions. He was clerk of the king's works at various places for two years at a good salary, a member of Parliament for Kent for one year, one of a commission to repair the bank of the Thames, a royal forester, and so on; and besides these sources of income he had his share of the perquisites of office and lucrative royal favors. In his prime, then, our great poet was a well-to-do man of affairs. In 1386 he met with reverses, and towards the end of his life he appears actually to have been in straits for want of money; however, when he died in 1400 he was again prosperous.

Chaucer's principal works are: a translation of the French *Romance of the Rose*, an early work, of which, at most, only a fragment is extant; *The House of Fame* (1379?), an aerial journey related in a whimsical and assured style, but left unfinished; *The Parliament of Fowls* (1382), a lively allegory; a prose translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (1383); *Troilus and Criseyda* (1384), a long and perfectly wrought version of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*; the *Legend of Good Women* (1385), also unfinished, with a pretty, spirited prologue and nine hurried lives or legends of amorous "martyrs"; and the *Canterbury Tales* (1386-94). Chaucer began like a good craftsman by translating from the French masters of his own century; then he came under the influence of the still greater Italians; and finally in the *Canterbury Tales* — from whatever source he appropriated his plots — he developed into our raciest, most thoroughly English-flavored, poet. These so-called "periods," however, are not mutually exclusive. The great position which Chaucer at once won and has ever since held served as much as the influence of London and the court to make his deft and melodious language the standard of literary English.

The principal modern editions of Chaucer are Skeat's, in six volumes, with complete apparatus, Oxford, 1899; Skeat's *Students' Chaucer*, and the *Globe Chaucer* by Pollard and others. Pollard's *Chaucer Primer* is a helpful companion. The Chaucer Society (now, alas, extinct) has printed much valuable material. Miss E. P. Hammond's *Chaucer, a Bibliographical Manual*, gives all the works upon Chaucer down to 1908. Our text is Skeat's in the *Students' Chaucer*, with half a dozen conservative changes.

Important critical works are *Studies in Chaucer*, by T. R. Lounsbury, 3 vols., New York, 1892; *The Poetry of Chaucer*, by R. K. Root, Boston, 1906; *Geoffrey Chaucer* by Emile Legouis, London and N. Y., 1913; and *Chaucer and his Poetry*, by G. L. Kittredge, Cambridge, Mass., 1915.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

The Canterbury Tales is far from being a completed work. The twenty-nine pilgrims were each to tell two (or four — see ll. 792-794 of the Prologue) stories; but we have only twenty finished, and four unfinished. Thus many gaps are left in our MSS., and editors designate the detached groups as A, B, C, etc. The *Knight's Tale* (2250 lines) is an adaptation of Boccaccio's *Teseide* (9054 lines). Less than a third of Chaucer's poem is actual translation, the rest being his own variations. The theme was one in which Chaucer had long been interested, and traces of Boccaccio's poem crop up in *Anelida and Arcite*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *Troilus*, and *The Legend of Good Women*. The *Prioress's Tale* Chaucer has taken from some Latin prose version current in England of this favorite legend. Strangely enough, the precise sort of Jew-baiting here pictured still persists in Russia and elsewhere, and not infrequently appears in the press. *Sir Thopas* is a merry burlesque of the most popular romances, like *Guy of Warwick*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *Launfal*, *Libeaus Disconus*, and *Sir Tristram*. The Nun's Priest's *Tale of the Cock and the Fox* is a story from the almost universal *Reynard the Fox* cycle, on which point one might consult Miss Petersen's "*On the Sources of the Nonne Prestes Tale*," Boston, 1898. The Pardoner's *Tale* is a sort of sermon, or *exemplum*, on the text, *Radix malorum est cupiditas*, and the edifying plot is one much employed both in the East and the West. Compare, for example, Kipling's *King's Ankus*, and the *Decameron*, Day 6, Novel 10. The Wife of Bath's

story belongs to a well-known type, a version of it being found, for instance, in *Bishop Percy's Fowle MS.*, vol. i., as *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, and in Sir Frederick Madden's *Sir Gawayne* as the *Weddyng of Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnel*. For the oldest types of it see G. H. Maynadier's *Wife of Bath's Tale*, London, 1901.

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

THE thirteenth century French *Roman de la Rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, was one of the most influential of European poems. Chaucer shows extreme familiarity with it, and tells us (*Legend of Good Women*, A Prologue, 255) that he translated it. The extant English version, of 7696 lines as contrasted with the 22,000 of the original, passed without question as his until 1870. Since then the authorship has been much debated; and at present most are inclined to call lines 1-1705 Chaucer's, lines 1706-5810 not Chaucer's, the rest possibly his; but the matter is not entirely settled. For a summary of the discussion see Miss Hammond's *Chaucer*, p. 451. The French poem has been edited by Meon, Paris, 1814, and by others. From the end of our excerpt the story goes on to tell how the youth entered the garden and fell in love with a fair bud in the rosary; how with the help of Good Reception and Venus he kissed it; then how Jealousy, Scandal and others drove him off; and how after a long strife, which Jean de Meun sows with interesting digressions, the lover finally won his rose.

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

The Parliament of Fowls celebrates the wooing by Richard II of the Lady Anne of Bohemia, whom he married at Westminster in January, 1382. Richard is the formel eagle, the other eagles his unsuccessful rivals. The vision setting is noteworthy as having been employed by Chaucer in several of his poems, probably under the influence of the *Romance of the Rose* and of the more recent French verse. On the interpretation of the historical allegory see Emerson, *Modern Philology*, VIII (1910), p. 45, and Moore, *Modern Language Notes* for Jan. 1911.

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

THE real creator of the Troilus and Criseyde story is Benoit de Sainte-Maure, who made it a conspicuous episode in his *Estorie (or Roman) de Troie*, an elaborate and entertainingly mediæval account of the fall of Troy in over 30,000 lines, written in the north-west of France about 1160 (ed. L. Constans for the Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1904 f.). Benoit elaborated the brief accounts of the Trojan War found in the late Latin writers Dares and Dictys; and his own work was latinized in about 1287 by Guido da Colonna (or delle Colonne) of Messina as the *Historia Trojana*. This again was the source of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, Chaucer's immediate model. Chaucer, however, takes only about half of the Italian, adds twice that amount of his own, and recurs occasionally to Boccaccio's predecessors. A minute comparison of the two works has been made by W. M. Rossetti in the publications of the Chaucer Society for 1875. Valuable recent articles are those by R. K. Root, in *The Poetry of Chaucer*, Boston, 1906, chap. 6; K. Young, *Origin and Development of the Story of T. & C.*, Chaucer Soc., 1908; Tatlock, *Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works*, Chaucer Soc., 1907, p. 1. f.; Kittredge, *The Development of Chaucer's Troilus, etc.*, Chaucer Soc., 1909.

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

The Legend of Good Women was planned to celebrate the constancy in love of twenty famous ladies; but Chaucer wearied of the undertaking and gave it up after nine of their

legends were finished. His models may have been the *Heroides* of Ovid, the *De Claris Mulieribus* of Boccaccio, and similar collections. It is an interesting circumstance that the Prologue, quite the most charming part of the poem, exists in two versions, of which the shorter or A version appears to be the later — though the matter is still in dispute. And this prologue, especially near the beginning, is in diction so amazingly like the works of the contemporary French poets Machault, Froissart, and Deschamps, that it has been surmised that Chaucer wrote it largely as a compliment to them and sent it to Deschamps in acknowledgment of certain flattering stanzas addressed by Deschamps to him. Important articles on *The Legend* are those of J. L. Lowes in the *Publication of the Modern Language Association of America*, xix, 593, and xx, 749, and J. C. French's *The Problem of the Two Prologues*, etc., Baltimore, 1905.

THOMAS HOCCELEVE

THE ingenuous Thomas Hoccleve (or Oecleve) was born about 1367, and died about 1450, so that he was precisely a contemporary of Lydgate. Like Lydgate he was a disciple and a profound admirer of Chaucer, perhaps indeed, as he claims, a friend. He was a Londoner, living till his old age at Chester's Inn (where Somerset House now stands), and daily going by the Strand or the river to his work in the Privy Seal office at Westminster. From official records and his own garrulous poems, we know a good deal about his life. In early manhood he lived gayly and extravagantly — at least so he says; when middle-aged and poor he married — for love; and when old he was cared for in Southwick Priory Hampshire. His chief works are the *Letters of Cupid* (475 ll.), translated from Christine de Pisan in 1402; *La Male Regle* (448 ll.), 1406, autobiographical; *The Regement of Princes* (5463 ll.), 1412, a book of advice for Prince Hal, from the *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus, and other sources; the *Complaint* (413 ll.) and the *Dialogue* (826 ll.), both about 1421, autobiographical poems. He wrote very pleasing short pieces — balades, roundels, etc. — and versified two stories from the *Gesta Romanorum*. Hoccleve's work is interesting for the naïve autobiographical details, the satire on follies of the day — like long sleeves — and the sincere tributes to Chaucer and Gower.

The verse is as a rule mechanical, unmusical, yet in certain of the short poems it shows spirit, and something like virtuosity. The extracts are from F. J. Furnivall's Edition of Hoccleve in 3 volumes for the E. E. T. S., with the capitalization somewhat modernized and *u* and *v* distinguished.

JOHN LYDGATE

JOHN LYDGATE lived from about 1370 to about 1450, a large part of this time as a monk of Bury St. Edmunds. For a while he was a priest of Hatfield Regis. Little else is known of his life, but judging from his many occasional poems, he dwelt much in the world and was a favorite of princes and nobles. His principal works are: *The Temple of Glass* (1403 ll., in 7-line stanzas), *Reason and Sensuality* (7040 ll., in short couplets, unfinished, rich in mediæval description, where Pallas and Venus strive for the author's allegiance), *The Troy Book* (30,117 ll. in heroic couplets), *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (24,832 ll. in short couplets), *The Fall of Princes* (36,316 ll. in 7- and 8-line stanzas), and the *Secreta Secretorum*, or *Secrees of Olde Philosoffres* (1491 ll. in rhyme royal). Besides this bulk of somewhat heavy poems, Lydgate produced a great amount of minor verse in various keys, such as fables, saints' lives, religious lyrics, mummings and satires, and in these much of his best is found. Lydgate's reputation in his lifetime was very great; he was constantly named with Chaucer and Gower, and early MSS. and reprints of his works abound. Of late he has been unduly depreciated, partly from lack of material to judge him by, partly from the corrupt state of the text. Now his works are gradually being made accessible. The best account of his life is in Schick's edition of *The Temple*

of *Glass*, E. E. T. S., London, 1891. H. N. MacCracken in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, vol. I, E. E. T. S., 1911, is authoritative on the Lydgate canon. Lydgate's style is smooth, dignified, long-winded; yet at times he attains liveliness and even grace. His diction is incredibly tinged by that of his revered master, Chaucer. Both in matter and manner he is thoroughly representative of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; he is a storehouse of mediæval commonplace.

JOHN SKELTON

THE extraordinarily conceited, whimsical, and pugnacious John Skelton was probably born at Diss in Norfolk about 1460. He was educated at Cambridge, and received the degree in rhetoric of *Poeta Laureatus* — of which he was extremely vain — not only from Cambridge, but from Oxford and Louvain as well. His great learning is attested by Caxton in the preface to his *Æneid*, by Erasmus, and by the fact that (about 1498) he was made tutor to the prince who (in 1509) became Henry VIII: it is likewise sufficiently patent in his works. From them it is plain that he was much at court, or at least about London. His patrons included Wolsey; but his attitude toward Henry's powerful minister gradually changed until in *Speak Parrot* and *Why Come Ye Not To Court* he virulently attacked the Cardinal. The result was that toward the end of his life the poet was obliged to take sanctuary at Westminster Abbey and stay there till his death in 1529. He had been rector of Diss and presumably resident there since 1503. Such was the mischievous and sportive nature of this misplaced parson that for long after his death he remained a stock figure in "merry tales" and plays. His chief works are: *The Bouge of Court* (before 1508), a vivid allegory of the corruption of courts (bouge=free board); *Philip Sparrow* (before 1508); *The Tunning of Elinour Rummung* (c. 1510); *Magnificence* (c. 1516), an elaborate morality play; *Colin Clout* (1519), a satire directed against the clergy; *A Goodly Garland of Laurel* (c. 1520), a long vision-allegory of self-laudation; and *Why Come Ye Not To Court?* (1522), a violent satire on Wolsey. Many of his works are lost. Skelton is among the most important and original of English satirists: though still under Chaucer's influence (especially in *The Garland of Laurel*), he is one of the beginners of our modern poetry.

The standard edition of his works is by Alexander Dyce, two vols., London, 1843. The present text is from the American edition of Dyce, Boston, 1866, with the spelling modernized — that being an attention which in the editors' opinion Skelton's poems particularly deserve: only an occasional (sounded) -es or -e is retained, and old spellings that indicate a different pronunciation from the present. Recent articles on Skelton are A. Kolbing's *Zur Characteristic Skeltons*, and Friedrich Brie's *Skelton Studien*, in *Englische Studien*, xxxvii, 1.

STEPHEN HAWES

STEPHEN HAWES (c. 1474–c. 1529) was a groom of the chamber to Henry VII, and a court poet. He was born in Suffolk, educated at Oxford; was travelled, accomplished, and knew most of Lydgate by heart. By all odds his most important work is *The Pastime of Pleasure*, or *The History of Graunde Amoure and La Bel Pucel, containing the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences and the Course of Man's Life in this World*, written in 1506. For descriptions of his other poems, see the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, p. 226. The copious extracts of *The Pastime* given in our text are from T. Wright's edition for the Percy Society, London, 1845. In this gentle allegory the hero, Grand Amour, sets out in search of La Bel Pucel. In the tower of Doctrine he is instructed in Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric — the *trivium*; and in Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy — the *quadrivium*. He finds La Bel Pucel and is accepted by her, but cannot marry until he undergoes successfully prodigious adventures with a three-headed giant, a seven-headed

giant, and other monsters. He overcomes all these obstacles and marries the damsel. At last age comes upon him, with Policy and Avarice; then Death with Contrition and Conscience; Remembrance writes his Épitaph, and Fame enrolls him among the great knights. The Pastime of Pleasure is a notable link between the old metrical romances and the old didactic allegories, on the one hand, and *The Faerie Queene*, on the other.

POPULAR BALLADS

A POPULAR or traditional ballad is a song that tells a story and that has been handed down among the folk for generations. Even when an individual author is presumed to have given the story its first form, his personal characteristics were obliterated in the long process of transmission, during which each singer modified the text at his will, until the product is truly that of the people. A text becomes fixed only when it is caught by print, and the life of the ballad, properly speaking, ends. The oldest so caught is *Judas*, found in a manuscript of the thirteenth century; and one of the most recent is the *Bitter Withy*, discovered in 1868. We have a few ballads written down in the fifteenth century; but the bulk of those extant probably date in their present form from the seventeenth century; Bishop Percy's old manuscript, for example, was written about 1650. In spite of the praise of ballads by Sir Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, and Addison, they were neglected by the literary world until well into the eighteenth century. An interest in them was one of the signs of the romantic movement, and the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765, which consists largely of old ballads, marks an epoch in English literature. The enthusiastic collecting period was from about 1750 to 1850, Percy and Sir Walter Scott being the most notable of the collectors.

Ballads are the simplest of poetry, the usual metre being a stanza of four roughly iambic lines, the unrhymed first and third of four beats, the rhyming second and fourth of three beats. It is common to have all four lines with four beats, or to have rhyming couplets; very few ballads have any greater metrical sophistication. The refrain is much employed; so is assonance and imperfect rhyme. There is much repetition of phrase and of situation; many of the epithets are conventional; the favorite numbers, three, seven, and nine are conspicuous; gold and silver and gems abound; supernatural phenomena are unhesitatingly accepted; the fairy world is very near, and beasts are not so different from men. Thus many archaic literary traits are preserved in the ballads, along with the emotions and the culture of a long past age.

The standard collection of English ballads is that by the late F. J. Child in ten parts or five volumes — *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, 1882–98. All these ballads (but not all the versions of them) have been reprinted in one convenient volume with the same title by Helen Child Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, Boston, 1904. The text of our selections is that of Child. The best critical account is that of F. B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*, Boston, 1907.

JOHN BARBOUR

FOR the life of John Barbour, the first of the important Scottish poets, we have the same sort of information as about his English contemporary Chaucer. From state papers we glean that he was born at about 1320, and that he died in 1395; that he was archdeacon of Aberdeen; that he frequently had safe-conduct to travel and study in England and France — as in 1357, for example, when Edward III permits him to conduct three scholars to Oxford; that in 1373 he was clerk of the audit and one of the auditors of the exchequer to Robert II of Scotland; and that he received various pensions and perquisites from his royal master.

As *The Bruce* was composed within fifty years of its hero's death, it is by no means devoid of historic authenticity, but in form it is a spirited romance, full of mediæval and

patriotic exaggeration, abounding in stirring narrative, and in sage reflections. The 13,615 octosyllabic lines are divided into fourteen cantos. The language is practically that of the north of England in the fourteenth century, and it is sometimes called "Early Scots" to distinguish it from the more sophisticated and more difficult "Middle Scots" of the writers after 1450. The best edition is that of W. W. Skeat for the E. E. T. S., 1870-89, and for the Scottish Text Society, 1893-95, from which latter our excerpts are taken.

In addition to *The Bruce*, Barbour has had attributed to him on insufficient evidence the fragmentary *Troy Book* in the northern dialect, a northern collection of *Legends of the Saints*, and, with perhaps better reason, the *Buik of Alexander*. Still further additions to his canon are proposed by G. Neilson in his *John Barbour*, London, 1900 (cf. *Athenæum*, 27 Feb., 1897, and *Scottish Antiquary*, Jan., 1897). See also J. T. T. Brown, *The Wallace and the Bruce Re-studied*, Bonn, 1900; and W. A. Craigie, "John Barbour and Blind Harry as Literature," *Scottish Review*, xxii, 173.

"BLIND HARRY"

THE authority usually cited for the date and the author of *The Wallace* is John Major (1470-1550), the Scottish historian, who says that such a work was composed in Major's infancy by a wandering minstrel, Henry, who was blind from his birth. There happen also to be entries of payments to a "Blin Harry" up to 1492 in the accounts of James IV. The poem, however, seems so much like the work of a well-read accomplished person, observant of nature and of affairs, that it is on the whole safer to consider the authorship doubtful. The unique MS., in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, is anonymous, as are also the early printed editions of 1508, 1570, 1594, 1601, 1611, etc.

The 11,858 lines, in eleven books, are a largely apocryphal biography of the great Scottish hero who figured so prominently in history from 1296 to 1298, and was brutally executed in 1305, but the rest of whose career is almost totally unknown. The work is written in the comparatively new "heroic" couplet introduced by Chaucer, and for the most part in a straightforward, energetic, unvaried style; but not infrequently the author shows that he can use the artificial, "aureate" terms of Middle Scots. The poem has had an immense popularity in Scotland, and in the modern Scots version of William Hamilton (1722) had some influence on Burns.

Our excerpts are from the edition of J. Moir for the Scottish Text Society, 1884-89. For the authorship see J. T. T. Brown's *The Wallace and the Bruce Re-studied*, Bonn, 1900, and for the best discussion of the legendary and historical constituents of the poem, with their bearing on authorship, the MS. dissertation of F. L. Childs, *Studies in The Wallace*, in Harvard University Library.

JAMES I OF SCOTS

KING JAMES I OF SCOTLAND, the author of the *King's Quair*, was captured at sea by the English in 1406 — when he was about eleven — and kept prisoner until 1424. In that year he married an English lady, Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, was ransomed, and went home to reign. After an energetic rule of thirteen years, during which he sought especially to crush the power of the turbulent nobles, he was savagely murdered at Perth by the outlawed Sir Robert Graham and a band of Highlanders.

The poem is an allegorical account of James's love affair. The metre is the seven-line stanza of Chaucer's *Troilus*, which, from James's use of it, is often called "rime royal." In form it is a love-vision of the type best known by the *Romance of the Rose*, and it abounds in reflections of Chaucer's works, though Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* is the chief source. In fact, it is one of the most characteristic pieces of the Chaucerian school. The language is a somewhat artificial one, partly northern or Scots, and partly that of Chaucer — Midland English. The date is between 1423 and his death in 1437.

The standard edition is that of W. W. Skeat for the Scottish Text Soc., new ed., 1911, from which our text is taken. The question of the authorship is debated in J. T. T. Brown's *The Authorship of the King's Quair*, Glasgow, 1896; Jusserand's *Jaques 1^{re} d'Ecosse ful-il poète*, Paris, 1897; R. S. Rait's *The King's Quair and the new Criticism*, 1898; A. Lawson's *King's Quair and the Quare of Jelusy*, Edinburgh, 1910. For sources, see W. A. Neilson's *Origins and Sources of the Court of Love*, Boston, 1899, pp. 152, 232 f.

ROBERT HENRYSON

ALMOST nothing is known of Henryson, one of the greatest of the Scottish Chaucerians. He lived perhaps from 1425 to 1500. He may be the master Robert Henryson, already "licentiate in arts and bachelor in degrees," incorporated a member of Glasgow University in 1462; and he is called "schoolmaster of Dumfermlin" in the earliest edition of his *Fables* (1560).

His *Testament of Cresseid*, written mostly in Chaucer's seven-line stanza, is, although a bit laden with mediæval machinery at the start, one of the most powerful and affecting poems of the century, as his *Robyn and Makyn* is one of the most graceful and pleasing of pastorals. The thirteen *Fables* are perhaps an even more significant accomplishment, for to this time-honored theme Henryson has brought so much vivacity and acute, sympathetic observation of men and beasts, that no fables have more flavor than his. Besides these Henryson wrote a dozen or more short poems. His works have been edited by D. Laing, Edinburgh, 1865; and by G. G. Smith for the Scottish Text Soc., 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1906-8. Our selections are from the latter, in the *Testament* and the fable of *The Two Mice* following the Charteris text, in *The Fox, the Wolf, and the Cadger* that of the Harleian MS.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

DUNBAR lived from about 1460 to 1520. He graduated bachelor of arts at St. Andrews in 1477, and master in 1479. He was probably of noble kin, but relatively humble station; and it is possible that he was for a time a wandering friar, though the biographical details that have been drawn from his poem on "How Dunbar was desyrd to be ane Freir" should be accepted cautiously on account of the obviously farcical nature of the poem. Later he was a priest at court, accompanied certain expeditions on the king's business, and received certain pensions and grants of livery. A poet's position in the beginning of the sixteenth century is still like Chaucer's.

Dunbar's two most important allegorical poems are those given in our text—*The Thistle and the Rose*, a parliament of beasts and birds in imitation of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, written in honor of the betrothal of James IV of Scotland and Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII of England; and *The Golden Targe*, wherein the poet represents himself as trying in vain to ward off the arrows of love by the shield of reason. These elegant stanzas are written in the Middle Scots "aureate" style, and in conscious emulation of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, characteristic praise of whom is to be found at the end of *The Golden Targe*. There is the same polish in several of the occasional pieces here given; but it is in the *Seven Deadly Sins*, the *Dregy*, and *Kind Kittok* that those qualities for which Dunbar is most famous appear—audacious fancy and rollicking humor, an astonishing virtuosity in every metre, and a cataclysmic wealth of strange words.

Dunbar wrote in all about a hundred poems. The most useful editions are those of J. Schipper, Vienna, 1894, and of John Small and others in the Scottish Text Soc., 1884-93. Our texts are from the latter. Schipper has also written a biographical and critical study, *William Dunbar, sein Leben und seine Gedichte*, Berlin, 1884.

GAVIN DOUGLAS

GAVIN DOUGLAS (c. 1475–1522) was third son of the great Earl of Angus, Archibald Bell-the-Cat. He was educated at St. Andrews, entered the church, and after many vicissitudes—for he was deep in the politics of a most turbulent period—became bishop of Dunkeld. All his literary work appears to have been done while he was Dean of St. Giles in Edinburgh, from 1501 to 1513. His *Aeneid* (1513), “the first version of a great poet in any English dialect,” is a translation of Virgil’s twelve books, and the thirteenth of Mapheus Vegius, in vigorous Middle Scots. Peculiarly interesting are the original prologues to all the books, on the seasons or other subjects not at all connected with the poems. That to the twelfth book is perhaps the most overwhelming example of the “fresch anamalit termes celicall,” the “sugurit,” “aureate,” “mellifluate,” coinages of these late Scottish mediævalists, who at the same time begin to show the influence of the Revival of Learning. *King Hart* is of course the human heart in the castle of the body, surrounded by his servitors, the five senses: it is a fairly well constructed allegory of over 900 lines. *The Palace of Honour*, Douglas’s earliest work (1501), comprises 2166 lines in nine-line stanzas. It is an over-elaborate dream-vision, stuffed with all manner of mediæval motives, where the poet finds Venus and Prince Honour in a mansion somewhat like that in Chaucer’s *House of Fame*.

The only collected edition of Douglas’s works is that by John Small, 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1874, from which our text is taken.

SIR DAVID LYNDESAY

SIR DAVID LYNDESAY lived approximately from 1490 to 1555. He may have attended St. Andrews University; thereafter, for most of his life, he was a personal attendant, in various offices, upon James V of Scotland, finally in 1529 attaining knighthood and the office of chief herald, or Lyon King of Arms. He was sent on several missions abroad, sat for a while as member of Parliament, and was a general master of ceremonies at the Scottish court.

In *The Dream* (1134 lines) Lyndesay is seeking to edify his young prince by an allegorical vision somewhat in Chaucer’s style, wherein after a visit to Hell, Purgatory, and the various spheres, his guide, Dame Remembrance, displays to him the native resources of his own Scotland; and when the author asks, “Why, then, is it so poor?” she replies, “Because of misgovernment”; and anon follows the excerpt given in our text, where John the Common Wealth lays bare in trenchant fashion the evils under which Scotland suffered. The date of composition may be 1528.

The Testament and Complaint of our Sovreign Lord’s Papyngo (1190 lines) is one of Lyndesay’s most polished satires. The papyngo or parrot is blown from the top of a high tree which she ought never to have climbed, and fatally hurt. She laments her ambition, and sends one warning epistle to the king, and another to her brethren of the court, which latter ends with the first three stanzas of our extract.

Kitty’s Confession is one of Lyndesay’s best short satires,—reasonable, pungent, and exposing an obvious specific abuse.

Squire Meldrum (1847 lines) is a little romance, which recalls in a way the old mediæval romances, but which is brought quite up to date—being founded indeed upon contemporary happenings. The Fifeshire hero-squire defeats the English champion in France, wins a sea-fight, also a lovely lady, takes a great castle, is at last dreadfully wounded and left for dead by brutal assailants, but recovers to live to a good old age and make the *Testament* which is given in our extract.

The chief works of Lyndesay’s not represented here are *The Dialogue betwixt Experience and a Courtier* (6333 lines), called also *The Monarchy*, an account of certain biblical stories and church doctrines, and *A Pleasant Satire of The Three Estates* (4652 lines), a

unique sort of morality play of great length and scope, a keen and amusing satire directed against the weaknesses of the nobles, the burgesses, and the clerics — indeed one of the most remarkable and entertaining works of the time, and the most vivacious and realistic of moralities.

Lyndesay is the last of the Scottish Chaucerians: he cites reverently the master's name along with those of Lydgate and Gower, but he is touched by the spirit of the Reformation and the Renaissance, and is as much a reformer as a poet. The principal edition of his works is that by David Laing, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1879. That by F. Hall and J. A. H. Murray for the E. E. T. S., from which our texts are taken, is unfinished.

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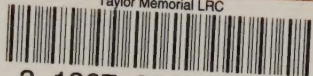
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